

“Remove every obstruction from my people’s way”

Is. 57:14

Revised Edition

THE POPE, THE COUNCIL, AND THE MASS

Answers to Questions the “Traditionalists” Have Asked

James Likoudis
and
Kenneth D. Whitehead

Emmaus Road Publishing
827 North Fourth Street
Steubenville, Ohio 43952

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First edition 1981

Second edition 1982

Third edition 2006

Printed in the United States of America

10 09 08 07 06 1 2 3

Library of Congress Control Number: 2006908470

ISBN: 1-931018-34-0

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are taken
from the Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition (RSV-CE)

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Cover design and layout by
Beth Hart

On the cover:
Saint Peter's Basilica, Vatican

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Abbreviations

The Old Testament

| | |
|----------|-------------------------|
| Gen. | Genesis |
| Ex. | Exodus |
| Lev. | Leviticus |
| Num. | Numbers |
| Deut. | Deuteronomy |
| Josh. | Joshua |
| Judg. | Judges |
| Ruth | Ruth |
| 1 Sam. | 1 Samuel |
| 2 Sam. | 2 Samuel |
| 1 Kings | 1 Kings |
| 2 Kings | 2 Kings |
| 1 Chron. | 1 Chronicles |
| 2 Chron. | 2 Chronicles |
| Ezra | Ezra |
| Neh. | Nehemiah |
| Tob. | Tobit |
| Jud. | Judith |
| Esther | Esther |
| Job | Job |
| Ps. | Psalms |
| Prov. | Proverbs |
| Eccles. | Ecclesiastes |
| Song | Song of Solomon |
| Wis. | Wisdom |
| Sir. | Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) |
| Is. | Isaiah |
| Jer. | Jeremiah |
| Lam. | Lamentations |
| Bar. | Baruch |
| Ezek. | Ezekiel |
| Dan. | Daniel |
| Hos. | Hosea |
| Joel | Joel |
| Amos | Amos |
| Obad. | Obadiah |
| Jon. | Jonah |
| Mic. | Micah |
| Nahum | Nahum |

| | |
|--------|-------------|
| Hab. | Habakkuk |
| Zeph. | Zephaniah |
| Hagg. | Haggai |
| Zech. | Zechariah |
| Mal. | Malachi |
| 1 Mac. | 1 Maccabees |
| 2 Mac. | 2 Maccabees |

The New Testament

| | |
|----------|-------------------------|
| Mt. | Matthew |
| Mk. | Mark |
| Lk. | Luke |
| Jn. | John |
| Acts | Acts of the Apostles |
| Rom. | Romans |
| 1 Cor. | 1 Corinthians |
| 2 Cor. | 2 Corinthians |
| Gal. | Galatians |
| Eph. | Ephesians |
| Phil. | Philippians |
| Col. | Colossians |
| 1 Thess. | 1 Thessalonians |
| 2 Thess. | 2 Thessalonians |
| 1 Tim. | 1 Timothy |
| 2 Tim. | 2 Timothy |
| Tit. | Titus |
| Philem. | Philemon |
| Heb. | Hebrews |
| Jas. | James |
| 1 Pet. | 1 Peter |
| 2 Pet. | 2 Peter |
| 1 Jn. | 1 John |
| 2 Jn. | 2 John |
| 3 Jn. | 3 John |
| Jude | Jude |
| Rev. | Revelation (Apocalypse) |

Documents of Vatican II

- SC** Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*), December 4, 1963
- IM** Decree on the Means of Social Communication (*Inter Mirifica*), December 4, 1963
- LG** Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*), November 21, 1964
- OE** Decree on the Catholic Eastern Churches (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*), November 21, 1964
- UR** Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*), November 21, 1964
- CD** Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church (*Christus Dominus*), October 28, 1965
- PC** Decree on the Up-to-Date Renewal of Religious Life (*Perfectae Caritatis*), October 28, 1965
- OT** Decree on the Training of Priests (*Optatam Totius*), October 28, 1965
- GE** Declaration on Christian Education (*Gravissimum Educationis*), October 28, 1965
- NA** Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (*Nostra Aetate*), October 28, 1965
- DV** Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*), November 18, 1965
- AA** Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*), November 18, 1965
- DH** Declaration on Religious Liberty (*Dignitatis Humanae*), December 7, 1965
- AG** Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity (*Ad Gentes Divinitus*), December 7, 1965
- PO** Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests (*Presbyterorum Ordinis*), December 7, 1965
- GS** Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*), December 7, 1965

Other Abbreviations

- EE** Pope John Paul II, Encyclical On the Eucharist in its Relationship to the Church *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (April 17, 2003)
- LXX** The Greek Septuagint

Introduction to the Revised Edition

During the 1970s, when the Catholic faithful were feeling the full force of the liturgical reform in the Catholic Church mandated by the Second Vatican Council we, the authors of this book, were full-time staff members of Catholics United for the Faith (CUF). In the course of our daily work, we received numerous calls and letters from distressed Catholics: “What is happening to my Church?” “What have they done to the Mass?” “Is this really what the Second Vatican Council ordered?” Such were the questions we heard.

Many of these “distress calls” contained a built-in conclusion, “An enemy has done this” (Mt. 13:28).

No one who lived through the implementation of Vatican II’s reform of the liturgy can deny that it was accompanied by a good many false starts, often great confusion and misunderstanding, and no little stress and turmoil. Many of these things are with us still, at least to some extent, more than forty years after the Council. Generally, throughout the post-conciliar era, adequate explanations were simply not given to the faithful about the nature of the changes being made in our worship and the reasons for them.

In addition to the officially mandated changes, there were the changes introduced by those with their own ideas of what a proper “renewed” liturgy ought to be. This latter phenomenon, the “do-it-yourself” liturgy, seemed to be little understood by Church authorities, who often gave the impression that they thought the desired reforms were working out just fine—contributing to the anguish of the “distress calls” frequently addressed to CUF.

Even before the liturgical reform was well underway, there were those who had a ready explanation for all that seemed to be going so wrong. These were the “Traditionalists,” who had been suspicious of the Council from the start, and who were not slow to rush in as soon as its perceived “bitter fruits” began to be evident. The Council was wrong, they argued; or it was invalid; or it was merely a “pastoral” Council, laying no binding obligation on Catholics to obey; and certainly some of its acts went contrary to Catholic tradition. Thus did the Traditionalists explain the situation.

The popes who came after Pope Pius XII were similarly judged to be wrong, whether for having convoked the Council, participated in it, or implemented its mandates and decrees. The Traditionalists generally made their case with a great show of citations and arguments from Catholic

tradition, supposedly proving that the Council and the conciliar popes had betrayed that tradition in various ways. In the midst of the upheavals and turmoil besetting Catholics in their parish life, too many were easily persuaded by these arguments.

Or, if not entirely persuaded, they were at least strongly tempted by the traditionalist arguments. It did sometimes seem that their formerly solid and “monolithic” Catholic Church was coming apart at the seams. What could have caused such a rapid erosion and even disintegration of traditional Catholic faith and practice?

We repeatedly encountered this and similar questions in the course of the 1970s. We tried to give honest answers to those Catholics who turned to us, answers based on authentic Church documents and sources. We diligently searched papal and conciliar documents trying to come up with answers to questions that were, at times, perplexing also to us. We were not infrequently disturbed by some of the things going on in the Church before our very eyes. Also, we were often puzzled by the apparent inability of some Church authorities even to see that all was not well with the reforms, much less to do anything about the situation.

We were, however, never seriously tempted to accept the traditionalist responses to the questions that bothered so many Catholics. Whatever the appearances, we were certain that the Second Vatican Council was a valid Council, the twenty-first General Council of the Catholic Church. All the popes who came after Pope Pius XII were validly elected and installed, rightful possessors of the authority Christ conferred on Peter and his successors in the See of Rome, and beneficiaries of the promise Christ made to remain always with His Church. Indeed, Pope Paul VI, no less than Pope John Paul II, struggled valiantly against great odds to do the right thing. Nor did it ever seem to us that the Church’s post-conciliar troubles, however serious and dispiriting, even remotely suggested that Christ’s promise to the Church had somehow been suspended in our day. Then, as always, Catholics were required by their faith to give their loyalty and obedience to the duly constituted authorities of the Church.

As we struggled to find suitable answers to the questions asked by distressed Catholics, we soon discovered that these questions fell into fairly definite patterns. The very same questions kept on recurring, no doubt sometimes inspired by various traditionalist publications. As we researched and wrote answers to the individuals who turned to us, we

eventually realized that we had virtually written a book on the whole traditionalist question.

This was how *The Pope, the Council, and the Mass* originally came to be written. Published in 1981, it soon found a fairly wide readership. Not a few Catholics have told us at various times how much the book helped them to get through their own personal encounter with the post-conciliar “troubles” in the Church. Over the years, the book continued to find new readers, and, after it went out of print, inquiries continued to be made as to where copies of it might be found. Apparently, some of the same “troubles” have continued to raise the same questions, at least in the minds of certain Catholics today.

Hence this revised edition, which is coming out a little more than a quarter of a century after we wrote the original book. Reading over what we wrote back then, it seemed to us that much or most of it is still pertinent today, especially for anyone interested in the traditionalist phenomenon. We decided, therefore, in this revised edition, to make no substantive changes to the text of the book as originally written. This has the advantage, we believe, of maintaining the spontaneity of the answers we provided to what were at the time—and, apparently, still are—urgent and burning questions for many loyal and faithful Catholics.

To the original notes in the 1981 edition there have been added in many, if not most, cases references to online sources for the documents referenced. In a number of cases, explanatory notes have also been added that did not appear in the original text.

Where updating seemed required in the case of some of the topics covered, we have added an occasional note or addendum at the end of the pertinent question. We have also added an additional twenty-fifth question to the twenty-four questions we covered in the original edition, for it seemed to us that, in a text so frequently given over to discussing errors and abuses and dealing with the questions that were disturbing the faithful, we had said too little about the positive merits of Vatican Council II's reform of the liturgy.

The Council did mandate a reform of the Church's liturgy, and that reform was duly carried out. Many mistakes were made along the way, as the highest authorities in the Church have long since admitted; but the reform was, nevertheless, carried out and put in place by legitimate Church authority. Anyone who imagines that the Catholic Church could

go back on the decisions of one of her ecumenical councils,¹ or on the valid and authoritative acts of her supreme pontiffs ordering the specific implementation of the conciliar mandate, or of her bishops lawfully putting in place the reforms decreed by Church authority, does not really know very much about or understand the true “Catholic tradition.” The decrees of an ecumenical council when they have received papal confirmation are binding upon all Christians. There is no going back on the decisions of one of the Church’s ecumenical councils, or on the valid and authoritative acts of her supreme pontiffs ordering the specific implementation of the conciliar mandate, or on her bishops lawfully putting in place the reforms decreed by Church authority.

Of course it is one of the overriding themes of this book—and of a good many other books—that the liturgical reform in question was far from being an entire success. But the remedy for that surely lies in the idea that more and more people, desiring a more suitable and reverent liturgy, are discussing today, namely, “the reform of the reform.” This is the approach that tradition-minded Catholics should adapt, we believe, in order to restore the reverence, beauty, and splendor of the ancient liturgy. The Church is surely going to go on from here in any case; she is certainly not going to go back; this seems to be even more evident today than it was when we originally wrote.

Meanwhile, for those who still prefer the Mass in Latin as it was celebrated prior to Vatican II, the Church has, however belatedly, now made pastoral provisions for more frequent and widespread celebration of the Mass using the old, unrevised Roman Missal—the so-called “Tridentine Mass,” or “Tridentine rite.” Both terms are actually misnomers, but are nevertheless widely used to describe the old Mass, as well as to distinguish it from the current (revised) normative Roman Missal, or New Order of the Mass (or *Novus Ordo*, or *Ordo Missae*, or Mass of Paul VI).

It is unfortunate that Church authority only finally allowed wider use of the Latin Tridentine Mass when under the threat—and later the reality—

1 See J. Wilhelm, “General Council,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, in fifteen volumes, vol. IV (NY: Robert Appleton Company, 1908). Also available online at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04423f.htm>. There have been twenty-one ecumenical councils. According to *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, general councils are “convened assemblies of ecclesiastical dignitaries and theological experts for the purpose of discussing and regulating matters of church doctrine and discipline.” There are seven ranks of councils or synods which take “territorial extension for a basis.” An ecumenical council is ranked first because “*Ecumenical Councils* are those to which the bishops, and others entitled to vote, are convoked from the whole world (*oikoumene*) under the presidency of the pope or his legates, and the decrees of which, having received papal confirmation, bind all Christians.”

of the schism of French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre and his followers in the Saint Pius X Society. We have added an Afterword discussing this and other developments since 1980. We have also added appendices containing: (1) the Congregation of Divine Worship's 1984 letter *Quattuor Abhinc Annos*, allowing the celebration of the Tridentine Mass under certain circumstances (Appendix V); and (2) Pope John Paul II's 1988 apostolic letter entitled *Ecclesia Dei*, regulating and encouraging the celebration of the Tridentine Mass (Appendix VI).

Finally, we have added both Appendix VII, containing several important texts of Pope John Paul II on the subject of liturgical abuses, and Appendix VIII containing some Vatican II and post-conciliar texts on the Mass as a sacrifice.

While we were laboring on these revisions, on April 2, 2005, the long and remarkable pontificate of Pope John Paul II came to an end with the death of the pontiff, and Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger was elected in his place as Pope Benedict XVI. In some ways, it was a surprising choice, both because of the new pope's age (seventy-eight) and because he had become such a controversial figure, at least in the eyes of some, while serving as the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith throughout most of the pontificate of John Paul II. In other ways, it was a very logical choice, both because of the new pope's outstanding abilities and accomplishments, which admirably fitted him to be Christ's Vicar, and because he provided such excellent continuity with the policies and achievements of his great predecessor. One of today's most outstanding theologians in his own right, Benedict XVI was noted in particular not only for his special knowledge of the sacred liturgy but also for his profound love of it. In the Afterword to this revised edition, we shall briefly discuss his accession to the chair of Peter as well as his attitude towards the Second Vatican Council—where he himself as a young priest served as *peritus* or theological advisor to German Cardinal Joseph Frings of Cologne. We also need to take note of his positions on the reformed Mass or liturgy, the principal subject of this book.

We now commend this new, revised edition of *The Pope, the Council, and the Mass* to a new generation of Catholics in the hope that it will be of help to those who have questions about how the reality of the Church's worship today relates to the Catholic tradition.

James Likoudis and Kenneth D. Whitehead

Memorial of St. Athanasius, May 2, 2006

Introduction to the 1981 Edition

Following the close of the Second Vatican Council in 1965, the Catholic Church embarked on a series of reforms and changes in her official worship and practices which have scarcely left a single Catholic unaffected; and which, in many respects, have changed the external image of the Church over the past decade.

Not all of the “changes,” which the average Catholic has experienced over the past decade and more, were necessarily decreed, or even desired, by the Council or by the Holy See. Some of the most characteristic and best known of the post-conciliar changes—“the guitar Mass, the handshake of peace, nuns wearing lay garb,” as one post-conciliar survey, superficially, has described them¹—seem to have arisen out of what many Catholics *thought* Vatican II called for or meant.

Too few people have yet grasped that the Council was not to have been the pretext for novel and often purely external changes. It was intended to be the basis for a profound renewal of the Catholic faith in the heart of the Catholic faithful, a renewal of faith that would enable them to evangelize the whole world once they had “turned again” (Lk. 22:31) and truly renewed their own faith. The Council’s own documents and the principal post-conciliar documents, which have issued from it, show this true meaning and purpose of the Council.² That this profound renewal of the faith has evidently not yet come about does not alter the fact that this *was* the Council’s original purpose.

When the Church held this general council, many changes in the worship and practice of the Church were adopted in a missionary spirit, in order to renew the faith of the Church and enable her to more effectively meet the challenges of the modern world. However, inextricably mixed up with what the Church ordained, additional changes have been brought about “from below.” In other words, while officially decreed “change” was being sanctioned by the authority of the Church, a good many people introduced *their* idea of what the Vatican II changes *should* have been.

What we are really saying here is well-known, though not often candidly discussed. Perhaps people do not know what to make of it, or

1 National Opinion Research Center (NORC) research team, “Is the Church Declining?,” in *Origins* (NC Documentary Service, April 8, 1976), p. 670.

2 All of the Council’s documents, and many of the major post-conciliar documents of the Holy See implementing the reforms of the Council, can be found in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery, O.P. (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Co., 1975) and online at www.vatican.va.

they do not consider it a very serious problem. But it is indisputable that many changes were adopted or imposed which Vatican II in no way called for and, based on what it *did* call for in its official documents, no way wanted or sanctioned.

At the time of the election of Pope John Paul I, the world press widely circulated a quotation from the French Dominican Yves Congar that the beloved "September Pope" had used and endorsed when he was Cardinal Patriarch of Venice:

The greater part of the ideas that are attributed to the Council today is not at all from the Council. For many the Council simply means change. Some things that we had believed or done before, according to them, are now no longer to be done, no longer to be believed. This has become the meaning of the Council.³

What the average Catholic has experienced since Vatican II has been an extensive series of seemingly never-ending changes in the practice or worship of the Church, the reasons for which have often been inadequately explained. Actually one of the most significant changes, in sharp contrast to the days before the Council, has been the establishment of a veritable cult of continuing change. Almost everybody has come to expect things to keep on changing; change seemingly has become the new norm.

The average Catholic is often unable to judge the legitimacy of all these changes, beyond knowing which ones he may personally like or dislike, *because* the officially sanctioned changes, and the reasons for them, have seldom been adequately explained. Thus, he may consider all changes to be on the same level:

1. Legitimate changes called for by the Council, officially decreed by the Holy See in one of its official enactments, and subsequently applied by the Catholic Bishops' Conference.
2. Changes which seem to have been introduced for no other reason than that some experts or committees thought it a good idea to introduce them, whether or not they were in harmony with the desires of the Council. Examples include the "guitar Mass," or standing for Communion, which,

3 Quoted in *Our Sunday Visitor* (September 19, 1978).

though permitted by the Church where it is a “custom,” was nowhere a custom in the U.S.A. until it was apparently thought to have been called for by Vatican II.

3. Things which have actually been forbidden, as well as unauthorized abuses of existing liturgical prescriptions, such as the indiscriminate use of extraordinary lay ministers, “self-service” from the chalice, the insertion of extraneous words and formulations into the liturgy, liturgical dancing, and so on.

Many changes since Vatican II, in other words, have proceeded as much from “the spirit of the times”—a radically secularized, this-worldly spirit, lacking in a real sense of the sacred—as from the actual enactments of the Council.

The Council still can, in the providence of God, bear good fruit, if Catholics will finally begin responding to it properly. History has shown that reforms promulgated by a general council may take years to be fully implemented in the life of the Church. For example, it was many years before the Council of Trent was fully and finally implemented. In the meanwhile it would be unrealistic to ignore the great harm that has been done to the Church, indeed to the future of the true renewal desired by the Council, by the admixture of *false* renewal which has flourished since the Council under the name of “the spirit of Vatican II.”

Now the “spirit” of anything is always of essential importance since it “gives life” (2 Cor. 3:6), but there are also times when we need to go back to take a look at the letter, and Vatican II is surely one of them. In considering some of the harm done by false renewal, we must also consider how, during the same period when old habits of worship were often being rudely upset and changed, the average Catholic was also being exposed to a spectacle of dissent and disobedience unheard of in recent centuries. The average Catholic surely recognizes, especially if he reads the Catholic press, that not only theologians and many married couples, but even some bishops now reserve the right to differ from the Vicar of Christ, as in the famous case of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* and its teaching on contraception.

In the United States, the Catholic Theological Society of America commissions studies which publicly advocate views at variance with what the Holy See and the U.S. bishops have expressly declared with regard

to sexual ethics and the ordination of women. These theologians are not merely engaged in polite debates or discussions among scholars in arcane journals. Rather, doctrinal and moral views patently at variance with the authentic teaching of the Church are widely and openly propagandized for, in the media, in the public forum, and in the marketplace, as now being acceptable for Catholics. This was the case, for example, with all the well-known theologians who publicly leaped to the defense of Fathers Hans Küng and Edward Schillebeeckx when the Holy See announced its investigation of the former and issued its declaration that the former could no longer function as a Catholic theologian. And, although Church authorities have acted in the case of such well-known dissenters as Fathers Küng and Schillebeeckx, others with views not so dissimilar continue to hold official positions in the Church while openly undermining her official Magisterium in the minds of the faithful.

If the average Catholic happens to be a parent, he or she has also had to cope with the quite inexplicable fact that the solid authentic doctrinal content of the faith⁴ has in varying degrees simply disappeared from many of the slick, attractive new religion books which have been the favored means of teaching religion in Catholic schools and CCD classes in recent years. The average Catholic parent has also learned to his or her sorrow that there often exists little interest at any official level in the United States in correcting the deficiencies in Catholic religious education. Anyone seriously looking at what is actually being taught in Catholic religious education, as evidenced by current religion books and "methodologies," will discover how little Catholic school children of the present generation actually know about their faith.

If what we are saying seems exaggerated or extreme, perhaps we should simply yield the floor for a moment to the editor of *Sacred Music* magazine whose testimony about the post-conciliar years parallels what we have said here:

Priests with the care of souls hailed the council and the possibilities it held for great pastoral achievement.

But then came the post-conciliar interpreters and implementers who invented "the spirit of the Council." They introduced practices never dreamed of by the

⁴ This content is still guaranteed by the Magisterium of the Church, for instance, by the 1971 General Catechetical Directory issued by the Holy See, by Pope John Paul II's outstanding 1979 Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*, and indeed by the U. S. bishop's own National Catechetical Directory, *Sharing the Light of Faith*, approved in 1979.

Council Fathers; they did away with Catholic traditions and customs never intended to be disturbed; they changed for the sake of change; they upset the sheep and terrified the shepherds.

With carefully orchestrated propaganda they deceived pastors into thinking that what they were proposing was the will of the Church, the directives of the Council and the Pope. They turned around the altars; they abolished Latin; they threw out the choirs; they destroyed statues and much ecclesiastical furniture; they even discouraged the Rosary and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, processions, novenas, and devotions. Instead of attracting those who were outside the fold, they drove away many of those who had been born and lived their lives within the Church. Pastors became worried when attendance at Sunday Mass began to decline; numbers at Confession grew fewer; the young said they did not need the Church or her sacraments. What happened to converts to the faith? A false ecumenism cut off the former steady stream of people entering the Church.

Worse yet, a new theology disturbed the pastors. What was being taught by these new theologians about the Incarnation and the Redemption? What indeed is the role of the Blessed Virgin and the saints? Were *de fide* truths still to be upheld? Some who claimed to know what the Vatican Council had taught denied even these basic truths. In matters of morality "theologians" were teaching new ideas about the commandments, if indeed they still existed at all, especially in matters of sexual conduct. And all this came into the parish and the parochial school with new catechetical materials. Parents grew disturbed along with their pastors.⁵

We do not endorse everything said by the editor of *Sacred Music*; we only cite him as a concurring witness to what we are asserting that, regardless of the intentions of the legitimate authorities in the Church, there has been

5 Msgr. Richard Schuler, "Basta," quoted in *Newsletter of Saint Francis of Assisi Chapter* (Shipbottom, NJ: Catholics United for the Faith, January 1979).

a great deal of confusion in the liturgy in the post-conciliar years and that many of the faithful have become upset as a result of that confusion.

Is it really any wonder, then, in the face of such confusion, dissent, disobedience, and even evident loss of faith within the Church that some Catholics have actually been *affected* by it all? Is it really surprising if the faith of some Catholics in the Church might actually be *shaken* by all that has been going on? Hasn't it really been inevitable that some Catholics would have connected the current disarray they see in the Church with the Second Vatican Council and with the changes that have been instituted since? We do not assert that there was anything wrong with the Council or with the legitimate post-conciliar changes. We only point to the evident fact that some of the faithful have unfortunately drawn this conclusion.

It should now be widely known—although almost nobody has cared to talk about it—that disaffection with the state of the Church is, in fact, spreading among some of the very Catholics formerly most concerned about their faith and their Church. Independent “chapels” are increasingly being set up by Catholics who believe they must be faithful to Catholic “Tradition,” as they understand it. More and more unauthorized “motel Masses” are being said by roving priests who reject the new revised Roman Missal and say only the Latin Tridentine Mass, celebrated everywhere in the Roman Rite prior to Pope Paul VI's 1969 revision of the Roman Missal.

The disaffection and disillusionment with the Church that currently exists among these Catholics calling themselves “Traditionalists” has most commonly expressed itself through resentment of the reforming acts of the Holy See (and the conferences of Catholic bishops) since Vatican II.

It has especially expressed itself through pointedly voiced doubts about the validity or suitability of the New Order of the Mass. Many Catholics, confused or distressed by the apparent unraveling of what they regarded as the essential fabric of their Catholic faith, have congregated where the “Tridentine” Mass is still celebrated. It is not only the followers of French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre who are doing this; a number of groups in addition to his Society of Saint Pius X now operate. They are composed of Catholics who have been alienated by all the “changes” which seemed to crop up helter skelter, which they could not understand, and which they came to believe, or were brought to believe, were changes in “essentials” of the Catholic faith that they knew, by definition, could never change, since Jesus had committed certain eternal truths into the keeping of His Church.

If the Church was not “holding fast,” as, in the opinion of some, she was not doing, then it meant for some either that the Antichrist had come, or that the “true Church” was henceforth to be found somewhere else than in the visible, contemporary hierarchical Church. It seemed that another “robber Council”⁶ had betrayed Catholic tradition.

Because of this, some conscientious Catholics have felt obliged to attach themselves to a priest who seemed to them to be true to what they considered authentic Catholic tradition, or to attend Mass at a chapel where the old, familiar Latin was intoned in an atmosphere of hushed reverence.

Moreover, these new traditionalist “little churches” do not constitute a phenomena which unhappily sprang up some time back owing to unfortunate misunderstandings, but which are now over and done with. Instead Catholics are continuing to lose their faith in the Church and deciding to abandon their parishes in favor of Mass at one of these independent “chapels,” no longer in communion with the local Catholic bishop or with the pope. Sometimes people will drive miles on Sundays to reach their chapels. They will do it because they still find there the externals of what they had once learned to regard as “the Church.”

It is worthy of note that the phenomenon is not confined to older Catholics “shell-shocked” by all the changes; Archbishop Lefebvre’s seminarians, for example, are all young men.

To be sure, energetic recruitment campaigns are also being directed by those Traditionalists, who have already “gone over,” towards confused and baffled Catholics who cannot understand what happened to the Catholic Church since the Council.

Vast “underground” literature now circulates, “proving” such things as that Pope Paul VI did not truly abrogate the Tridentine Mass, that the New Order of the Mass is invalid and sacrilegious or at the very least ambiguous, that certain officials of the Roman Curia have secretly been Masons all along, that the Second Vatican Council taught certain things contrary to tradition, that Protestants were allowed to infiltrate the Church at Vatican II, and that Pope Paul VI himself, whether consciously or unconsciously, was an accomplice in dismantling the Church during the post-conciliar years.

A more serious and nuanced traditionalist literature is also now being produced that employs all the trappings of scholarship and is sometimes

6 A phrase of Pope Saint Leo the Great. Applied to the false council held by a number of bishops at Ephesus a few years before the true Council of Chalcedon in 451.

published by reputable publishing houses. It is interesting how plausible and persuasive such literature can be within its own terms of reference. Once certain traditionalist premises are accepted, the case that can be built is quite imposing, and it would be a mistake for anyone who cares about the Church to dismiss it. We cannot regard the widespread circulation of such literature as anything but a serious malaise in the post-conciliar Church.

And it seems that, beyond doubt, the principal cause of the traditionalist revolt is to be found in the proliferation of errors and abuses, as well as in the generalized confusion, in the post-conciliar Church. An international theologian of the stature of Hans Urs von Balthasar has been willing to subscribe to this thesis. In a 1977 speech in Saint Gall, Switzerland, he said that “a systematic destruction of the faith is taking place. I could give you massive evidence of this. . . . This is the real background which has provoked the tiresome history of Archbishop Lefebvre. . . . Very few understand who the true culprits are.”⁷

Indeed, the authority of Pope John Paul I can be invoked in support of the thesis that abuses by liberals or progressives have provoked the traditionalist reaction. In the homily he delivered when taking possession of the Cathedral of Saint John Lateran, John Paul I declared: “Certain abuses in liturgical matters have succeeded, through reaction, in favoring attitudes that have led to a taking up of positions that in themselves cannot be upheld and are in contrast with the Gospel.”⁸

Thus John Paul I did not think the traditionalist reaction was *justified*, but he did see that it *was* a reaction to other things that had been going on in the post-conciliar Church. However mistaken the Traditionalists may be in the answers they have found to the questions that perplexed them, the fact is that they did have questions about the state of the Church that were both serious and honest questions. Some of these Catholics have migrated into one of the “little churches” only when they couldn’t get any satisfactory answers to their questions.

It is thus the intention of the two authors in this volume to consider the major questions that have been raised by many Catholic Traditionalists about the Pope, the Council, and the Mass—and, to the best of our ability, to provide to these questions satisfactory answers which accord with the true faith and

7 Quoted in *Timor Domini* (Switzerland, May 1978).

8 Pope John Paul I, “Homily on Taking Possession of His Cathedral” (September 23, 1978). Available online at www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP1CATHE.HTM.

discipline of the Church. We believe that the position of the Traditionalists is intrinsically untenable; we hope to show this from official teachings of the Catholic Church, principally those dating from before the Second Vatican Council. We do believe that the traditionalist questions are serious questions that deserve serious answers, and that is what we have tried to provide. We sympathize in some measure with the grief and outrage that have sometimes afflicted Catholics in the present desacralized age; but we believe that the ultimate restoration of values, which we share with some Traditionalists, depends upon continuing *sentire cum ecclesia*, “to think with the Church.”

We, the authors, have frequently written and spoken in defense of the authentic Catholic faith, and against those we may term the “modernists” in the Church, especially regarding such subjects as abortion, contraception, sex education, catechetics, and so on. We are far from being unaware or naïve about the problems in these areas. But it must be emphasized that we are not writing about any of these subjects in this particular book.

Also, we are national Vice-Presidents of a lay association, Catholics United for the Faith (CUF), which at its founding pledged “unshakeable loyalty to the Pope, and thus to the Church, and thus to Christ,” and which unhesitatingly accepts and submits to all the enactments of legitimate authority in the Church, whether in the liturgical sphere or in any other sphere. As the following pages will demonstrate, we unreservedly accept the enactments and reforms of Vatican Council II, as presented in the Council’s official documents—indeed, even enthusiastically so. We likewise accept all the authentic enactments and decisions of Popes John Paul II, John Paul I, Paul VI, and John XXIII, *and* of the U.S. bishops acting within their sphere of competence, since the Council.

Through a rather extensive correspondence with people who have directed their questions to CUF (or have sometimes challenged CUF for its loyalty to the pope and bishops), we believe we have achieved some understanding of the questions the Traditionalists are asking. Hence, in the absence of a more “official” answer from the Church herself, through duly constituted authorities, we are essaying, as Catholic laymen bearing witness and subject to correction by the authority of the Church, the answers given in this volume. We have relied as far as possible on official Church documents, in the hope that many who might be tempted to despair of the Church in the middle of the present confusion will realize that God did not guide His Church through all the centuries only to abandon her now, in the second half of the secularized twentieth century. The Church

enjoys a promise from Christ Himself that she will never fail; the successor of Peter, in particular, enjoys a promise that his faith will not fail and that he will confirm his brethren (Lk. 22:32).

Hence, we Catholics, men and women in the pews, must remember, in spite of whatever degree of confusion, disarray, or false renewal we may witness, that Christ still asks us to have *faith* in His Church. The Church does go on. The true faith has not endured for nearly twenty centuries only to be put out of business by such things as “dissent,” the “rock Mass,” and the like. The true faith still is widely preached and practiced, often edifyingly so. Exemplary Catholics in all walks of life and in all degrees in the Church do still let their light shine among men, as Our Savior asked. Not even the distortions of today’s mass media can entirely obscure the clear teaching voice of the successor of Peter, who regardless of his personal identity and regardless of the difficulties with which he has had to cope in the past few difficult years, *has* continued to teach “in season and out of season” (2 Tim. 4:2).

The attention focused by the whole world on the twin elections of Popes John Paul I and John Paul II, and on the spectacular pilgrimages of Pope John Paul II to Mexico, Poland, and the United States, have dramatically confirmed how the whole world has been obliged to “confess,” as it were, that the Bishop of Rome is indeed not only the visible head of the Catholic Church but also the obvious world leader of all who profess the name of Christ.

And Pope John Paul II has not otherwise been slow to provide us new hope for a new era in which we will surely witness renewed respect and reverence for the central mystery of our holy faith, the Mass. In his first encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*, John Paul II declared:

It is not permissible for us, in thought, life or action, to take away from this truly most holy sacrament its full magnitude and its essential meaning. It is at one and the same time a sacrifice-sacrament, a communion-sacrament, and a presence-sacrament. And although it is true that the Eucharist always was and must continue to be the most profound revelation of the human brotherhood of Christ’s disciples and confessors, it cannot be treated merely as an “occasion” for manifesting this brotherhood. When celebrating the sacrament of the body and blood of the Lord, the full magnitude of the divine mystery must be

respected, as must the full meaning of this sacramental sign in which Christ is really present and is received, the soul is filled with grace and the pledge of future glory is given. This is the source of the duty to carry out rigorously the liturgical rules and everything that is a manifestation of community worship offered to God Himself, all the more so because in this sacramental sign He entrusts Himself to us with limitless trust, as if not taking into consideration our human weakness, our unworthiness, the force of habit, routine, or even the possibility of insult. Every member of the Church, especially bishops and priests, must be vigilant in seeing that this sacrament of love shall be at the center of the life of the People of God, so that through all the manifestations of worship due to it Christ shall be given back "love for love" and truly become "the life of our souls." (no. 20)

Pope John Paul II also delivered the same message to the U.S. bishops when he spoke to them in Chicago on October 6, 1979:

As chosen leaders in a community of praise and prayer, it is our special joy to offer the Eucharist and to give our people a sense of their vocation as an Easter people, with the "Alleluia" as their song. And let us always recall that the validity of all liturgical development and the effectiveness of every liturgical sign presupposes the great principle that the Catholic Liturgy is theo-centric and that it is above all "the worship of Divine Majesty" in union with Jesus Christ.

Our people have a supernatural sense whereby they look for reverence in all liturgies, especially in what touches the Mystery of the Eucharist. With deep faith our people understand that the Eucharist in the Mass and outside the Mass is the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, and therefore deserves the worship that is given to the living God and to Him alone.⁹

⁹ Pope John Paul II, "Address to the Bishops of the United States" (October 6, 1979), as quoted by James Likoudis in "The Degradation of Catholic Worship: Part VIII," *Servium Newsletter*, Jan/Feb 1996, available online at <http://credo.stormloader.com/Liturgy/liturgy8.htm>.

Rejoicing in the hope of the new era, inaugurated by the Pope from Poland, but also “patient in tribulation,” as Saint Paul counseled (Rom. 12:12), we must carry on and keep the faith in spite of what may have happened in the post-conciliar years. Our faith is based not on the state of the Church, in this or any other age, but rather upon “the authority of God who reveals, and who can neither deceive nor be deceived.”¹⁰

James Likoudis and Kenneth D. Whitehead

Memorial of Saint Thomas Aquinas, January 28, 1981

¹⁰ First Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution of the Catholic Faith *Dei Filius* (April 24, 1870), available online at <http://www.ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/V1.HTM#4>.

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Why were all the changes made when everything was going so well for the Church? Conversions were up, vocations were up, and we had a beautiful traditional Mass that communicated the sense of the sacred. Why was all that abruptly changed?

It would be foolish to deny that in some respects older Catholics can look back upon a “golden age” of the Church, which witnessed extraordinary developments in piety, devotion, conversions, missionary conquests, and a remarkable material flourishing, especially in the United States, and indeed, throughout North America. A truly impressive network of seminaries, convents, houses of study, and schools (from elementary schools to colleges and universities) reflected heroic labors by bishops, priests, religious, and laity to establish the Church in a cultural environment, which was in many ways hostile to Catholicism. The holy lives and wise policies of the popes from Leo XIII to Pius XII contributed enormously to the prestige of the Church in a world growing increasingly secular.

Nevertheless, it is also undeniable that there were some weaknesses underlying the imposing external facade of twentieth-century Catholicism. Pope Leo XIII had prophetically diagnosed the major weaknesses of the Church in the United States as early as 1899 in his apostolic letter *Testem Benevolentiae*, sent to Cardinal James Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore. In this letter Pope Leo spoke of “followers of . . . novelties [who] judge that a certain liberty ought to be introduced into the Church so that, limiting the exercise of its powers, each one of the faithful may act more freely in pursuance of his own natural bent and capacity.”¹ What the great Pontiff describes as a danger to the Church resembles what some consider the Church to be today, a “do-as-you please” church. The fact that Leo XIII was warning Catholics in America about the danger of this before the turn of the twentieth-century means that the seeds of it already existed. We have seen the danger grow abundantly since.

It is also worthy of remark that serious deficiencies in the life of the Church prior to the Council were commented upon at great length by various converts to the Church, many of whom were disturbed at the

1 Pope Leo XIII, On Americanism *Testem Benevolentiae* (January 22, 1899), trans. John Tracy Ellis, ed. in *Documents of American Catholic History*, vol. II (Chicago: Regnery, 1967), p. 537. Also available online at <http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/L13TESTE.HTM>.

apathy, indifference, conformism, and lack of apostolic zeal and ardor evident in the lives of all too many Catholics. The appearance of a liturgical movement among American Catholics (in addition to a renewed interest in biblical and theological scholarship, as well as in Thomistic philosophy) also indicated the existence of further efforts to bring a greater understanding of liturgy to the people, some of whom were ill-instructed in the Faith. The gap between awareness of the meaning of faith in one's personal life and the steadily increasing secularization of public and social life was growing ever wider as the century progressed, and Catholics were affected by the secularization and materialism around them more deeply than was realized.

The weakness underlying much traditional Catholic observance and practice can be found in the amazingly quick collapse of the formerly imposing façade of American Catholicism that has been manifested since the Second Vatican Council and the rapid changes which followed in its wake. The faith of countless Catholics proved unable to withstand the sharp challenges and confusions of today. Whether the issue was birth control or liturgical change, too many Catholics were not very Catholic, being unwilling to follow the hierarchical Church, when the crunch came. This is a continuing phenomenon. A beautiful Latin liturgy proved to be no barrier to widespread spiritual collapse. And, moreover, we must not romanticize the matter for the liturgy was often *not* celebrated with that much care, reverence, beauty, and splendor.

Much responsibility for the confusion that followed in the wake of the Council in the United States and Canada can undoubtedly be laid at the door of the clergy, who, in the experience of most Catholics, carried out the Council's liturgical reforms in a sometimes mindless way. Yet what can one say about the depth of supernatural faith in Christ and His promises that could be shaken because the Mass began to be said in English? Or merely because of liturgical scandals? This is not to minimize the consequences of such scandals in the lives of those who have found the very sense of the sacred eliminated in their parish's liturgical life. But *Christ* must always remain the proper object of our faith, and never the externals of liturgical practice which admittedly have been confusing over the past few years. Any change in deep-rooted habits can cause confusion. This is especially true where habits of worship are concerned. But allowing confusion to drive one from the Church is much more unfortunate than the liturgical chaos itself. And the fact is the Church did determine through the Second Vatican Council to make far-reaching changes in her worship and

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practices, and the calling of the Council by Pope John XXIII was a perfectly legitimate exercise of the supreme authority in the Church which, as we shall see in the answers to later questions, he possessed. The convocation of a council by the pope to help deal with problems which the Church had to face was also an eminently traditional act. Popes have many times called councils to deal with problems and, almost without exception, councils have introduced modifications in the Church's discipline.

Pope Leo XIII, in his letter on Americanism quoted above, even remarked how fitting it is for the Church "to admit modifications" in her discipline (though never in her doctrine) "according to the diversity of time and place." Pope Leo continues:

The Church, indeed, possess what her Author has bestowed on her, a kind and merciful disposition; for which reason from the very beginning she willingly showed herself to be what Paul proclaimed in his own regard: "I became all things to all men, that I might save all" (1 Cor. 9:22). The history of all past ages is witness that the Apostolic See, to which not only the office of teaching but also the supreme government of the whole Church was committed, has constantly adhered to the same doctrine in the same sense and in the same mind: but that it has always been accustomed to so modify the rule of life that, while keeping the divine right inviolate, it has never disregarded the manners and customs of the various nations which it embraces. If required for the salvation of souls, who will doubt that it is ready to do so at the present time? But this is not to be determined by the will of private individuals, who are mostly deceived by the appearance of right, but ought to be left to the judgment of the Church.²

When Pope John XXIII convoked a general council of the Church, one of his reasons was to enable the Church to deal better with the "manner and customs" of the modern world; in doing so, he was only demonstrating what his predecessor had indicated, namely, that the Church was ready to change "if required for the salvation of souls." And what Pope John

2 Pope Leo XIII, *Testem Benevolentiae*, p. 540.

saw—one of the principal reasons he gave for calling the Second Vatican Council—were the souls of countless modern men in need of Christ but without Christ. “It is a source of considerable sorrow,” Pope John said in his opening speech to the Council, “to see that the greater part of the human race . . . does not yet participate in those sources of divine grace which exist in the Catholic Church.” It was in order, therefore, that the Church’s doctrine might “influence the numerous fields of human activity” that Pope John thought a council was necessary so that the Church could better “look to the present, to the new conditions and new forms of life introduced into the modern world which have opened new avenues to the Catholic apostolate.”³

This remains true today; the Council was called for a legitimate reason, and the program of the Council remains to be carried out. “What the Spirit said to the Church through the Council of our time,” Pope John Paul II wrote in his first encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, “cannot lead to anything else—in spite of momentary uneasiness—but a still more mature solidity of the whole People of God, aware of their salvific mission.”⁴

In an address to a special plenary session of the College of Cardinals held between November 5 and 11, 1979, Pope John Paul II went even further in speaking of the central importance of the Second Vatican Council, in spite of some of the deformations that have followed it. The Pope said:

Obedience to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council is obedience to the Holy Spirit, who is given to the Church in order to remind her at every stage of history of everything that Christ said, in order to teach the Church all things (cf. Jn. 14:26). Obedience to the Holy Spirit is expressed in the authentic carrying out of the tasks indicated by the council, in full accordance with the teaching set forth therein.

These tasks cannot be treated as though they did not exist. It is not possible to claim to make the Church go back, so to speak, along the path of human history. But neither

3 Pope John XXIII, “Opening Speech to the Council” (October 11, 1962), in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott, S. J., trans. and ed. Joseph Gallagher (NY: America Press, 1966), pp. 710-719. Also available online at <http://www.christusrex.org/www1/CDHN/v2.html>.

4 Pope John Paul II, *The Redeemer of Man Redemptor Hominis* (March 4, 1979), no. 3. Available online at www.vatican.va.

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is it possible to rush presumptuously ahead, toward ways of living, thinking and preaching Christian truth, and finally to ways of being a Christian, a priest, a religious that are not envisioned in the integral teaching of the council—"integral," that is to say, understood in the light of the whole of sacred Tradition and on the basis of the constant Magisterium of the Church herself.⁵

It was providential, then, that the Council, under the guidance of Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI, clearly addressed itself to the removal of some of the past Church patterns of externalism, legalism, and formalism that in some ways had served to paralyze the evangelizing energies of priests, religious, and lay people in spreading the Gospel among the peoples of the modern world, who are already undergoing vast cultural and technological changes. Anyone who remembers the pre-conciliar Church remembers how the Catholic laity commonly assumed that it was not their responsibility to spread the faith; religion was the business of the priests and religious. That was too often the attitude of the clergy, as well! It is an attitude that must now be changed. In a de-Christianized world, religion is the business of the believing laity, even as it also remains the business of the clergy.

Just as the Council of Trent itself was a "reforming Council" preparing the Church to meet effectively the challenges of a post-Reformation Europe, so the Second Vatican Council was similarly intended to be a reforming Council, designed by God's Providence to meet the new challenge of contemporary unbelief—which in our day calls for *evangelization*! In the words of Pope Paul VI, "the objectives [of the Council] are definitely summed up in this single one: to make the Church of the Twentieth Century ever better fitted for proclaiming the Gospel to the people of the Twentieth Century."⁶

Pope John Paul II echoed this when he wrote in *Redemptor Hominis* that:

5 Pope John Paul II, "At the conclusion of the Plenary Assembly of the Sacred College" (November 9, 1979). Available online in Latin at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1979/november/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19791109_riunione-plenaria_lt.html.

6 Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation on Evangelization in the Modern World *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (December 8, 1975), no. 2. Available online at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi_en.html.

The Church's consciousness must go with universal openness, in order that all may be able to find in her 'the unsearchable riches of Christ' (Eph. 3:8) spoken of by the Apostle of the Gentiles. Such openness, organically joined with the awareness of her own nature and certainty of her own truth, of which Christ said, 'The word which you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me' (Jn. 14:24), is what gives the Church her apostolic or in other words her missionary dynamism professing and proclaiming in its integrity the whole of the truth transmitted by Christ.⁷

This does not mean that the Church since the Council has not been beset with problems. Pope John Paul II admitted that "the Church that I . . . have had entrusted to me is not free of internal difficulties and tension,"⁸ but he insisted that Catholics must now move ahead in spite of these difficulties because God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). Who but those in what Vatican II reiterated is "the true Church"⁹ can better help bring men to the knowledge of the truth that resides in the Catholic Church?

If we will make the effort to look at recent Church history from the long-range perspective of God's dealings with His People, we must realize how possible and even likely it was that no one would have ever paid the slightest attention to any of the things the Second Vatican Council *really* said, or that the Popes have said subsequently, if we had not had the thorough shaking up that in fact we have had. "Why are you afraid, O men of little faith?" (Mt. 8:26). As Saint Anthony of Padua said long ago, and as is true today: "Only when the proud house of earthly comfort is reduced to a ruin, can the Lord prepare a dwelling place for His inward comforting." It should be clear by now that we must look more carefully at the actual teachings of the Council, and try, finally, to put those teachings of the Council into practice. We certainly cannot go back to the past, however glorious its successes were. It is toward the long-awaited "second spring" in the life of the Church (foreshadowed in the writings of Pius XII and more recently by the Second Vatican Council) that we must now head

7 Pope John Paul II, *Redemptor Homints*, no. 4.

8 *Ibid.*

9 Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (December 4, 1963), no. 2. Available online at http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html.

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under the guidance of the successors of Peter, chief shepherds of the flock. What John Paul II has said on this subject is unmistakable:

The Pope . . . expects a noble and generous effort on your part to always know better your Church. The Second Vatican Council wanted to be a Council about the Church. Take the documents of the Council, especially *Lumen Gentium*, and study them. With loving attention. Then you will discover that there is not a “new Church”! The Council has revealed with more clarity the one Church of Christ, one having new dimensions but the same in essence.

The Pope expects from you a loyal acceptance of the Church. You cannot be faithful and remain attached to secondary things, valid in the past but already outdated. You will not be faithful either if you try to build the so-called Church of the future, unrelated to the present.

We must be faithful to the Church born once and for all from the plan of God: at the cross, the empty tomb and at Pentecost, which is born not of the people or from reason, but from God.¹⁰

With respect to the liturgical abuses that have scandalized many Catholics and caused some to doubt the Church, a further observation is perhaps in order. These scandals have *not* flowed from the genuine reform of the Mass decreed by the Council, but from *disobedience* to the decrees of the Council and to the subsequent liturgical enactments of the Holy See. It is no remedy to these abuses and scandals to engage in disobedience oneself by rejecting or criticizing the authority of a pope or an ecumenical council convoked and presided over by a pope. There is nothing traditionally Catholic about that; the very idea of Catholics opposing a pope or an ecumenical council would surely have scandalized any earlier generation of Catholics as much as the liturgical aberrations have scandalized some today.

If we imagine that the course the Church has taken since the Council is going to be reversed—again we are talking about the official changes, not unauthorized abuses that individuals may have introduced—we should

¹⁰ Pope John Paul II, homily delivered in Mexico City (January 29, 1979).

reflect prayerfully on the fact that both of the Roman pontiffs elected since the end of the Council, Popes John Paul I and John Paul II, declared decisively that their pontificates would be dedicated to carrying out the official decrees of the Council. Pope John Paul I inaugurated his brief reign by saying:

We wish to continue implementing without interruption the legacy left us by the Second Vatican Council. Its wise norms must be applied. Here we must be on guard lest impulses that arise perhaps from generosity but are nonetheless imprudent, should distort the teaching and meaning of the council. We need also to be vigilant lest, on the other hand, efforts at restraint that are inspired by timidity should dampen the stimulus to renewed life which the council gave.¹¹

Upon his election to the office of Peter, Pope John Paul II similarly declared:

First of all, we wish to point out the unceasing importance of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, and we accept the definite duty of assiduously bringing it into effect. Indeed, is not that universal Council a kind of milestone as it were, an event of the utmost importance in the almost two thousand year history of the Church, and consequently in the religious and cultural history of the world?¹²

It seems clear that, whatever we thought about some of the gusts that blew in when good Pope John XXIII opened up those famous windows, we are nevertheless now equally obliged to go *forward* from the fact of the Council and what it decreed. If mistakes have occurred in the implementation of its decrees—and they have—if errors and abuses have cropped up—and they have—the remedy for them is nevertheless to be found in a more careful

11 Pope John Paul I, To the Cardinals and to the World *Urbi et Orbi* address (August 27, 1978). Available online in Latin at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_i/messages/documents/hf_jp-i_mes_urbi-et-orbi_27081978_it.html.

12 Pope John Paul II, To the Cardinals and to the World *Urbi et Orbi* address (October 17, 1978). Available online at www.ewtn.com/jp2/papa3/jp2urbi.htm.

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implementation of the official reforms of the Council. The Church has to move forward, not back. The revised Roman Missal containing the New Order of Mass is now an integral part of what is today “given” for loyal Catholics. To continue to protest about the *Novus Ordo* and to call for a return of the “Tridentine Mass” is to distract from more important issues of concern, for example, the integrity of Catholic doctrine in the face of the unprecedented assault against it by the forces of the modern world. Possible further revisions of the Roman Missal to help enhance or restore greater reverence and a more profound sense of the sacred, the possible revival of Latin as a liturgical language alongside the vernacular, better (and perhaps more accurate) vernacular translations of the Mass and other sacraments—all these aims will only be achieved in loyal submission to and docile partnership with legitimate Church authority, not in acrimonious conflict with that authority because of changes which have already been made, even if they have not always turned out as well as they could.

When the New Order of Mass is celebrated as it ought to be—with dignity, splendor, and solemnity, all called for by the rubrics for the *Novus Ordo Missae*—the average Catholic would experience the same reverence in the “Mass of Saint Pius V”¹³ and the “Mass of Paul VI” using the Roman Canon. The latter, as we will show in some of the answers to questions which follow, is really the same as always, and continues to give us the living Christ as sacrifice and sacrament. We should remember that, even if the traditional liturgy as promulgated by Saint Pius V had never been changed, infidelity, modernism, and secular humanism would still be with us, as they were before the changes came about, and they would still constitute the main dangers to the faith today.

At times, the laity may have much to suffer these days. But we cannot complain about the disobedience of modernists and secularizers in the Church if we ourselves become disobedient to the legitimate authority of the Church.

And, in considering the whole question of the extent to which the Church can change the externals of the liturgy or the administration of the sacraments, a matter which will be discussed in detail in the sections which follow, we should consider the wise words of Pope Pius XII:

13 So called because while the Council of Trent called for a reform of the liturgy, it was Pope Pius V (1566–1572) who actually implemented that reform.

As our Lord Jesus Christ gave the Church only one government under the authority of the Prince of the Apostles, one single faith, one single sacrifice, so He gave only one single treasury of signs producing grace, namely, the sacraments. Nor has the Church in the course of centuries substituted other sacraments for those sacraments instituted by Christ, nor has she the power to make this substitution, for, according to the teaching of the Council of Trent, the seven sacraments of the New Law were instituted by Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Church has no power over "the substance of the sacraments," that is, over those things which, according to the sources of divine revelation, Christ the Lord Himself prescribed must be maintained in the sacramental signs. . . .

But if, by the will and prescription of the Church, these rites were at one time necessary for the validity [of the sacrament], everyone knows that *what the Church had decreed she has also the power to change or to abrogate.*¹⁴

Thus the Third General Council of the Church, at Ephesus in Asia Minor, decreed in AD 431 that "it should not be lawful to publish another faith or Creed than that which was defined by the Nicene Council."¹⁵ The Fourth General Council at Chalcedon twenty years later explicitly confirmed this decree; yet the great Council of Trent in the sixteenth century decreed that a new Creed *did* have to be published—what has since been most commonly called the Creed, or Profession of Faith, of Pope Pius IV. What the Church has herself decreed, she also has the power to change or abrogate through proper Church authority.

Similarly, among the large number of decrees issued by the Fourth General Council of the Lateran, convened by Pope Innocent III in AD 1215, was a canon forbidding the foundation of any new religious orders.¹⁶

14 Pope Pius XII, Apostolic Constitution *Sacramentum Ordinis* (November 30, 1947), in *The Church: Papal Teachings*, selected and arranged by the Benedictine Monks of Solesmes, trans. Mother E. O'Gorman, RSCJ (Boston, MA: St. Paul Editions, 1962), p. 638. (Emphasis added).

15 See <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05491a.htm>.

16 Philip Hughes, *The Church in Crisis: A History of General Councils* (NY: Hanover House, 1961), p. 218.

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Considering all the new religious orders that have been founded since 1215—including the great Dominican order, which dates its foundation to within a decade after this Lateran decree forbidding any new religious orders—it is clear that the Church has the authority to change her own Church laws (not divine laws) for reasons which seem to her good and sufficient. In the past, she has made changes in Church law or discipline that may have seemed to some to affect unchangeable essentials—but the Church herself was the judge that they were not changes in essentials.

We shall demonstrate in the course of our answers to specific questions raised by those concerned about the post-Vatican II changes that the principal changes that have most disturbed or distressed people do *not* affect what Pope Pius XII above calls “the substance of the sacraments”—insofar, of course, as these disturbing changes are really official changes decreed by the authority of the Church and not aberrations introduced by individuals on their own. We shall also show that the Church had the authority to make changes in exactly the sense understood by Pope Pius XII, and exercised by the Council of Trent when it modified decrees of the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, and by the medieval Popes when they approved the foundation of religious orders despite the decree prohibiting their foundation as enacted by the Fourth General Council of the Lateran.



Addendum to Question 1

The above discussion mentions the “revised Roman Missal.” Its first Latin edition appeared in 1970. A second edition was issued in 1975, and it was this second edition which was normative at the time of the publication of the original edition of this book. The third Latin edition (*editio typica tertia*) of the revised Roman Missal was approved in the Jubilee Year 2000, although it was not published until 2001. Its General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) contains the normative liturgical rubrics and regulations that must now be followed in American dioceses. Some practices formerly allowed or not addressed in previous editions are now prohibited. For example, the Lectionary is never to be carried in the entrance procession. The processional Cross must have the figure of the crucified Christ. Hymns are not to be substituted for chants found in the Order of Mass, such as the *Gloria* or the *Agnus Dei*. The deacon, if

present, must kneel during the Eucharistic Prayer until the elevation of the Chalice. Extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist are not to approach the altar before the priest has received Holy Communion, and must always accept from the hands of the priest the vessel from which they distribute Communion. These and other rubrics contained in the 2001 GIRM are clearly intended to place a new emphasis on the sacred.

After a twenty-five year evaluation of liturgical celebrations using the 1975 edition, there is much in the new GIRM to warrant the judgment of the current prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Cardinal Francis Arinze, that “the do-it-yourself Mass is ended; go in peace.”¹⁷

¹⁷ Robert Moynihan, as quoted in “The Return of the Latin Mass?” in *Inside the Vatican* (May 13, 2003).

Question 2

But wasn't Vatican II merely a "pastoral council"? Are the faithful obliged to follow such a council, especially when its "fruits" have proved to be so bitter?

The term "pastoral council" as applied to Vatican II is merely a popular description and does not refer to any specific type of council recognized by the authority of the Catholic Church. The teachings and decisions of this supposed "pastoral council" presumably would not be as binding upon members of the Church as those of a "dogmatic" council. In the Church there are three types of councils or synods, "national councils," "provincial councils," or "general (ecumenical) councils," but none styled specifically a "pastoral council."¹

Pope John XXIII stated that he was calling a council for reasons that could be broadly termed "pastoral," although Pope John used the word merely to speak of the need for a Church Magisterium (or teaching authority) "which is predominantly pastoral in character." Pope Paul VI similarly spoke of the "pastoral nature of the Council" in his weekly General Audience of January 12, 1966, but he did not call it a "pastoral council" as if this were some new species of Church gathering that the faithful might go along with or not, as they chose.

To convene a general council with a pastoral purpose, in short, was *not* to convene some new kind of Church council that was not binding on the faithful. What Pope John XXIII really said with regard to his reasons for convoking the Council was that "a Council was not necessary. . . . as a discussion of one article or another of the fundamental doctrine of the Church which has repeatedly been taught. . . . and which is presumed to be well known and familiar to all."²

This did not mean, however, that doctrine—Catholic truth—was to be of no importance at the Council. On the contrary, Pope John XXIII said that the "*greatest* concern of the Ecumenical Council is this: that the sacred deposit of Christian doctrine should be guarded and taught more efficaciously."³ This concern that doctrine be, at least in a sense,

1 Peter M. J. Stravinskias, *Catholic Encyclopedia* (Huntington, IN: OSV, 1991), p. 267.

2 Pope John XXIII, "Opening Address to the Second Vatican Council" (October 11, 1962).

3 Pope John XXIII, "Opening Address." (Emphasis added).

the greatest concern of the Council is entirely in keeping with the real meaning of the word “pastoral.”

The word “pastoral” refers to the work of a shepherd; and Jesus, the Good Shepherd, taught plainly that “for this I was born and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the *truth*” (Jn. 18:37, emphasis added). Our Lord remarks that “the sheep follow Him for they know His voice” (Jn. 10:4); and He makes clear that those who do hear His voice are those who are “of the truth” (Jn. 18:38). When Our Lord solemnly commissioned Simon Peter and said, “Feed my sheep” (Jn. 21:17), He meant that Peter was to feed them with the truths of the Faith; and thus to be “pastoral” is, precisely, to be “doctrinal” first of all. The two words are not opposed.

Hence, in calling a council for a pastoral purpose, John XXIII was in no way downgrading doctrine. What Pope John wanted was rather a re-ordering of the Church’s priorities so that the truths entrusted to her by Christ could be more effectively communicated for the benefit of the world. The Pope wanted to call all the bishops of the world together to help him decide how the Church should present herself to the world over the next several generations in order to meet the challenges of modern times. In order to bring “the modern world into contact with the vivifying and perennial energies of the gospel,” Pope John said, “the Church finds very alive the desire to fortify its faith and . . . to promote the sanctification of its members, the diffusion of revealed truth, the consolidation of its agencies.”⁴

What Pope John meant by that “renewal,” which he ardently hoped would be the principal result of the Council, was that “by bringing herself up to date where required, and by the wise organization of mutual cooperation, the Church will make men, families and peoples really turn their minds to heavenly things.”⁵ In other words, far from not being concerned with doctrine, or the truths of the Faith, the Council was originally intended to result in precisely the widest possible diffusion of that Catholic truth so desperately needed by the whole world.

Even if good Pope John’s fond hopes for the Council still remain largely to be realized,⁶ nobody can thereby argue that the purposes for

4 Pope John XXIII, Apostolic Constitution Convoking the Council *Humanae Salutis* (December 25, 1961), in Abbott, *The Documents of Vatican II*, pp. 705-709.

5 Pope John XXIII, “Opening Address.”

6 This statement reflects the situation before many of the reforms implemented during the Pontificate of Pope John Paul II (1978–2005).

which he called the Council were not legitimate purposes of the Church, which God placed in the world to sanctify and save all mankind.

In fact, though, it has never been the case that general or ecumenical councils have been assembled merely to “define doctrine,” as would seem to be assumed by those who want to downgrade the importance of Vatican II by calling it “merely” a “pastoral council.”

When convoking the First Vatican Council back in 1868, for example, Pope Pius IX included among his reasons for doing so, in addition to defining and defending doctrine, “the maintenance and establishment of ecclesiastical discipline, and moral reform among peoples overtaken by corruption”—reasons entirely in harmony with those adduced by Pope John XXIII for bringing together all the bishops of the world for the Second Vatican Council, nearly a century after the First had met under Pope Pius IX. Indeed, Pius IX’s general description of why general councils are brought together at all could have been equally used by Pope John XXIII: “When they have judged it timely and, above all, during the most troubled eras when our holy religion and civil society are prey to disaster, . . . [the] Pontiffs have not neglected to convoke general councils in order to act with and unite their strength to the strength of the bishops of the whole Catholic world.”⁷ Pius IX’s description surely applies to our own times as much as to his.

And some of the fruits which the First Vatican Council ascribed to the great Council of Trent were similarly not unlike those which Pope John hoped would come out of Vatican II: “closer communion of members with the visible head of the Church, and increased vitality in the entire Mystical Body of Christ; a multiplication in the number of religious congregations and other institutions of Christian piety; and a zeal in spreading the Kingdom of Christ throughout the world that was unremitting and steadfast even to the shedding of blood.”⁸ The Council of Trent gave the Church an immense body of pastoral directives. No ecumenical council in the history of the Church defined more doctrines than Trent; yet most of Trent’s work was nevertheless “pastoral.”

The very first general council of the Church, the Council of Nicaea, which met in AD 325 in addition to dealing with the Arian heresy, also

7 Pope Pius IX, Apostolic Letter *Aeterni Patris* (June 29, 1868), in O’Gorman, *The Church*, p. 193. (It convoked the episcopate to the Ecumenical Council of the Vatican. Please note: Leo XIII also wrote an encyclical entitled *Aeterni Patris*).

8 Vatican Council I, Dogmatic Constitution of the Catholic Faith *Dei Filius* (April 24, 1870), Introduction, in Broderick, *The Documents of Vatican Council I*, pp. 37-52. Also available online at www.ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/V1.HTM#4.

addressed disciplinary matters concerning disputed bishoprics and the disputed date of Easter, and actually promulgated twenty disciplinary canons⁹—so much for “defining doctrine” being the only purpose of a general council!

Another early council, the Fourth General Council of Constantinople (AD 869-870), was not even called to deal with doctrine at all, but merely to deal with disciplinary matters. Thus, like Vatican II, it was certainly “pastoral” in nature, as Popes Paul and John styled Vatican II. The great Catholic historian Monsignor Philip Hughes has described Constantinople IV, the Eighth General Council of the Catholic Church, as “a matter of personalities in conflict, and not ideas, still less, doctrines.” The same historian has recorded how the Second General Council of Lyons in AD 1274 was also a Council predominantly “pastoral” in nature, summoned by Pope Gregory X “to inaugurate a real restoration of religious fervor” offsetting what Monsignor Hughes described as “the miserable degradation of Christian life throughout the West” at the time.¹⁰

Yet even these councils, “pastoral” as their nature was, ended up teaching some doctrine. In addition to all its disciplinary canons, the Fourth General Council of Constantinople issued a dogmatic pronouncement condemning a contemporary heretical theory that man had two souls; and, in addition to thirty disciplinary canons, the Second General Council of Lyons issued a Constitution on the Blessed Trinity and the Catholic faith defining the procession of the Holy Spirit.¹¹

This brings us to the very important point that Vatican II, although convoked by John XXIII for the “pastoral” reasons quoted above, also did end up teaching Catholic doctrine, like the earlier Church “pastoral” councils. Vatican II issued two Dogmatic Constitutions: *Lumen Gentium* on the Church, and *Dei Verbum* on Divine Revelation, exactly the same number of Dogmatic Constitutions as issued, for example, by Vatican Council I.

These two Dogmatic Constitutions from Vatican II do not contain canons with anathemas attached (“If anyone say . . . let him be anathema”), as has been the case with some other ecumenical councils; but Catholic doctrine need not be framed in a dogmatic canon with an anathema attached in order to be true, or to qualify as authentic Catholic doctrine

9 Hughes, *The Church in Crisis*, pp. 33-36.

10 *Ibid.*, pp. 181, 239.

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 176, 240.

that the Catholic faithful are obliged to believe. When Jesus Christ taught that “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (Jn. 14:6) and “The Bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh” (Jn. 6:51), these doctrines were not drawn up in dogmatic canons with anathemas attached. Nevertheless, they remain no less true and no less binding on the belief of Catholics. The Church has no requirement that her doctrine always be expressed in a particular way. The fact that Vatican II’s two Dogmatic Constitutions (as well as, in varying degrees, the fourteen other documents of the Council) contain considerable authentic doctrine to which assent by the faithful is required, should be obvious to any instructed Catholic who reads them.

Indeed, a note to Vatican II’s Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, explicitly says that in this “pastoral” document the Church: (1) develops her *teaching* and also: (2) applies it to some of today’s pressing problems—the latter of which, the note says, are “contingent.” This certainly does not mean that the basic doctrinal teachings as such are also contingent, only that the application of them might change. The whole point of bringing together at a council all the Catholic bishops around the world was, precisely, to teach and to apply those teachings to the problems Catholics and the Church face today. It would have been nonsensical to convene a council; the results of which would somehow be disregardable at the option of the faithful. What would be the point of having a teaching Church at all if, in a solemn general council, she does not necessarily teach? Or, how could it be said that the Church really ruled in Christ’s stead if the disciplinary enactments of her Twenty-First General Council were similarly to be considered optional for the faithful?

In fact, the Vatican II documents resemble the acts of all the other twenty ecumenical councils in the history of the Church in that they contain *both* doctrinal *and* disciplinary matters—the former of which requires the assent of our intellects, and the latter of which requires the obedience of our wills.

In his book *Sources of Renewal* Karol Cardinal Wojtyla (later Pope John Paul II) wrote:

It may be said that every Council in the Church’s history has been a pastoral one, if only because the assembled bishops, under the Pope’s guidance, are pastors of the Church.

At the same time every Council is an act of the supreme Magisterium of the Church. Magisterium signifies teaching based on authority, a teaching which is the mission of the Apostles and their successors: it is part of their function and an essential task. This teaching is concerned essentially with questions of faith and morals: what men and women should believe in and in what manner, and hence how they should live according to their faith. The doctrine of faith and morals (*doctrina fidei et morum*) is the content of the teaching of the pastors of the Church, so that on the one hand doctrinal acts of the Magisterium have a pastoral sense, while on the other pastoral acts have a doctrinal significance, deeply rooted as they are in faith and morals. These pastoral acts contain the doctrine that the Church proclaims; they often make it clearer and more precise, striving incessantly to achieve the fullness of the divine truth (cf. John 16:13).

All this has been signally confirmed by Vatican II, which, while preserving its pastoral character and mindful of the purpose for which it was called, profoundly developed the doctrine of faith and thus provided a basis for its enrichment.¹²

To what extent have Catholics always been required to give their assent and obedience to the teaching and enactments of a general council according to the authentic tradition of the Church?

Pope Pius IX taught on this subject in a letter to the Abbot of Solesmes: "the Ecumenical Council is governed by the Holy Spirit. . . . [I]t is solely by the impulse of this Divine Spirit that the Council defines and proposes what must be believed." Note that it is not only what the Council "defines," but what it "proposes." In another letter, the Pontiff inveighed against those who had dared "to state in most pernicious writings that in the definition and the promulgation of the decrees of the [First Vatican] Council . . . [that] there was something lacking to the full value and the full authority of an Ecumenical Council." The Pope sadly recalled what he termed "the well-known calumnies spread against other Councils, and especially, the

¹² Karol Wojtyła (Pope John Paul II), *Sources of Renewal: The Implementation of Vatican II* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979), pp. 16-17.

Councils of Florence and of Trent, by the schismatics and heretics of the age, to their own loss and the spiritual ruin of a great number.”¹³

Pope Leo XIII similarly affirmed the assent and obedience owed by Catholics to the enactments of a general council: “There can be no doubt that the decisions of the Holy See or those of the General Councils, above all in matters of faith, are by themselves and by their very nature, obligatory on all the faithful.”¹⁴ Let us note well that Leo XIII says not “only” or “uniquely” in matters of faith, but “above all” in matters of faith—thus not excluding those things in the *acta* of a council that are not, strictly speaking, matters of faith.

This, then, is the traditional teaching of the Church: The teachings of an ecumenical council are protected from error and their decisions are binding on all Catholics. Ludwig Ott says: “It has been the constant teaching of the Church from the earliest times that the resolutions of General Councils are infallible.”¹⁵ Saint Athanasius wrote of the First General Council of the Church that “the word of the Lord, put forth by the Ecumenical Council at Nicaea, is an eternal word, enduring forever.”¹⁶ What the ecumenical councils “teach as the truth,” Monsignor Philip Hughes remarks, speaking as a historian summing up the tradition, “is taken to be as true as though it were a statement of Scripture itself.”¹⁷ Cardinal Newman is not afraid to say that what a “General Council speaks is the word of God.”¹⁸ And all those testimonials reflect the view the apostles themselves took of their own decisions at the Council of Jerusalem described in the Acts of the Apostles: “[I]t has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us” (Acts 15:28).

And let us bear in mind that this view of Church councils acting in the place of God Himself was not limited to what these councils taught as doctrine; it extended also to what they decided in disciplinary matters. At the Council of Jerusalem the thing which it “seemed good to the

13 Pope Pius IX, (1) *Letter Dolendum Profecto* to Dom Gueranger, Abbot of Solesmes (March 12, 1870); (2) *Letter Inter Gravissimas* to the German Episcopal Assembly at Fulda (October 28, 1870), in O’Gorman, *The Church*, pp. 202; 219-220.

14 Pope Leo XIII, *Letter Sicut Acceptum* to the Archbishop of Munich (April 29, 1889), in O’Gorman, *The Church*, p. 282.

15 Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, ed. James Canon Bastible, D. D., and trans. Patrick Lynch, Ph. D. (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Company, 1954), p. 298.

16 As quoted in Hughes, *The Church in Crisis*, p. 14.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

18 As quoted in Wilfred Ward, *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman*, vol. II (NY: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1912), p. 240.

Holy Spirit” and to the apostles present to decide was the disciplinary question of whether Gentile converts to Christianity were subject to Jewish ritual laws. In the fifth century, at the Council of Chalcedon, the bishops attending decreed the deposition of an Archbishop of Alexandria, Dioscorus. Having deposed him, the bishops in council who had made the decision then cried out, “*God has deposed Dioscorus! Dioscorus has been justly deposed. It is Christ Who has deposed him.*”¹⁹

Similarly, earlier in the fifth century, at the Council of Ephesus, the Fathers acclaimed with regard to their disciplinary judgment deposing Nestorius as the Archbishop of Constantinople: “Our Lord Jesus Christ, Whom Nestorius has blasphemed, declares Nestorius to be deposed as bishop and excluded from the entire sacerdotal college.”²⁰ Christ Himself was understood to be acting through this general council, and in a purely disciplinary matter.

The view of the Fathers of Chalcedon and Ephesus about what they believed they were doing when acting together in general council naturally has to be understood today in light of the developed doctrine that acts of a general council have to be ratified by the pope. “There is never an ecumenical council,” Vatican II taught, summing up the Tradition, “which is not confirmed or at least recognized as such by Peter’s successor.”²¹ Nevertheless, the Catholic tradition concerning the importance of the acts of a general council, whether in doctrine or in discipline, is very clear, as the Council of Trent too recognized in its explicit teaching that the Catholic bishops are the successors of those apostles who at the Council of Jerusalem presumed to speak in the name of the Holy Spirit.

Indeed, the Profession of Faith of the Council of Trent²² specifically required acceptance of and belief in everything “transmitted, defined *and declared* by the sacred canons and the ecumenical councils.”²³ In

19 Evagrius Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History (AD 432–594)*, trans. E. Walford (1846), bk. 2, ch. 16. Also available online at www.ccel.org. (Emphasis added).

20 Augustin Fliche and Victor Martin, as quoted in *Histoire de l’Eglise Depuis Les Origines Jusqu’a Nos Jours*, vol. 4 (Paris: Bloud and Gay, 1948), p. 182.

21 Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* (November 21, 1964), no. 22.

22 The Profession of Faith of the Council of Trent is also known as the Profession of Faith of Pius IV since it was issued in 1564 by this Pope in response to Trent’s decree (1563) that all prelates in the Church would have to make a specific act of faith and obedience to the Holy See.

23 *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*, ed. J. Neuner, S. J., and J. Dupuis, S. J., (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, Inc., 1975), pp. 21–24. The Council of Trent’s teaching that the Catholic bishops are the successors of the apostles is to be found in the same volume, chiefly, p. 468. (Emphasis added).

other words, what Catholics must hold with regard to the decisions of general councils of the Church is *not* limited, according to this Tridentine Profession of Faith, only to what is strictly “defined.”

Vatican Council II, convoked, presided over, and ratified by a Vicar of Christ, definitely falls within the category of ecumenical or general councils—we use these terms synonymously—to which these traditional Church teachings certainly apply. We must, as Catholics, accept and obey the decisions and decrees of this Council (as of all the other twenty general councils of the Church that preceded it) as interpreted by the continuous living authority of the Church.

In order to hold any other position about Vatican II, whether with regard to its teachings or its disciplinary enactments,²⁴ it would be necessary to prove that Vatican II was not a general council of the Church. This, as we have shown, cannot be proved. Merely styling Vatican II a “pastoral council” does not constitute a proof that the documents of this particular Council are not just as binding upon the faithful as those of any of the other twenty ecumenical councils that preceded it. A general council is a general council. There is no support in Catholic tradition for the idea that the faithful may elect not to follow the enactments of a general council of the Church.

As Cardinal Joseph Hoeffner, the Archbishop of Cologne, declared in a Pastoral Letter on August 10, 1975:

Decisions [of general councils] concerning disciplinary and liturgical questions are also under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. When the apostles held their so-called apostolic council, they promulgated their disciplinary decisions with the solemn words: “The Holy Spirit and we have decided” (Acts 15:28).

We may safely conclude that the Catholic faithful are obliged to follow Vatican II; its pastoral nature exempted no one from the obligation to follow its directives.

Above all, we should not confuse the question of the obligation of Catholics to obey the Council’s disciplinary enactments with the question

²⁴ For instance, when the Council says in its Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (no. 25), that the Church’s “liturgical books are to be revised as soon as possible.”

of whether or not what it taught was “infallible.” As we have already seen, the Catholic tradition is that general councils are protected from doctrinal error by the Holy Spirit even when they are not engaged in making dogmatic pronouncements.

Some try to reason: “The Council was not infallible (meaning it did not solemnly define any new dogmas of faith); therefore we need not follow it.” This is a fallacy. As Pope Paul VI said, the Council’s teachings always have at least “the authority of the supreme ordinary Magisterium. This ordinary Magisterium, which is so obviously official, has to be accepted with docility and sincerity by all the faithful, in accordance with the mind of the Council on the nature and aims of the individual documents.”²⁵

Pope Paul VI was propounding nothing new to Catholic tradition here. Pope Pius IX as far back as 1863 had already made clear that Catholics owe the submission of internal assent not only to defined dogmas but to the decisions of the ordinary Magisterium as well. Writing to the Archbishop of Munich about a theological Congress being held in the latter’s diocese, Pope Pius IX said:

We address to the members of this Congress well-merited praise, because, rejecting, as We expected they would, this false distinction between the philosopher and the philosophy of which We have spoken in earlier letters, they have recognized and accepted that all Catholics are obliged in conscience in their writings to obey the dogmatic decrees of the Catholic Church, which is infallible. In giving them the praise which is their due for confessing a truth which flows necessarily from the obligation of the Catholic faith, We love to think that they have not intended to restrict this obligation of obedience, which is strictly binding on Catholic professors and writers, solely to the points defined by the infallible judgment of the Church as dogmas of faith which all men must believe. And We are persuaded that they have not intended to declare that this perfect adhesion to revealed truths, which they have recognized to be absolutely necessary to the true progress of science and the refutation of error, could be theirs if faith and obedience were only

25 Pope Paul VI, General Audience (January 12, 1966).

Question 2: Was Vatican II a Pastoral Council?

accorded to dogmas expressly defined by the Church. Even when it is only a question of the submission owed to divine faith, this cannot be limited merely to points defined by the express decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, or of the Roman Pontiffs and of this Apostolic See; this submission must also be extended to all that has been handed down as divinely revealed by the ordinary teaching authority of the entire Church spread over the whole world.²⁶

What this means is that teachings of the Church do not have to be expressed as solemnly defined dogmas before they have to be believed with “loyal submission of the will and intellect,”²⁷ as Vatican II phrased it. Nor do the disciplinary enactments have to involve “infallible” pronouncements in order to oblige us to obey them. This issue has sometimes been confused in some traditionalist writing and argument when it has been asserted on the one hand that conciliar (or papal) decisions need not be followed because they do not enjoy the note of infallibility, and that opposition to, say, the New Order of the Mass is not a doctrinal but a disciplinary matter “only.”

Such traditionalist arguments are inconsistent. It cannot be shown from Catholic tradition either that Catholics may dissent from non-infallible Church teachings or that they may disobey or disregard authentic Church disciplinary enactments. Rather the contrary is true, as we have amply demonstrated above as far as the Second Vatican Council is concerned.



Addendum to Question 2

Paul VI explained clearly that Vatican II was a “pastoral council” precisely because it was a “doctrinal council.” He rejected the attempt by dissenters (both Traditionalists and neo-modernists) to term Vatican II merely a “pastoral council” and not a “doctrinal council.” Actually, various Vatican II teachings resulted in a doctrinal progress that had long been prepared by theological reflection. Vatican II saw a legitimate development of doctrine taking place—for example, in its declaring that the fullness of the Sacrament of Orders is conferred by episcopal consecration. In an

26 Pope Pius IX, Letter *Tuas Libenter* to the Archbishop of Munich (December 21, 1863), in O’Gorman, *The Church*, p. 173.

27 Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 25.

address to the fifth and seventh regions of the U.S. bishops in 1978, Pope John Paul II emphasized that the pastoral directives of Vatican II could not be divorced from their doctrinal foundations: "The sacred deposit of God's word, handed on by the Church, is the joy and strength of our people's lives. It is the only pastoral solution to the many problems of our day. To present this sacred deposit of Christian doctrine in all its purity and integrity, in all its exigencies, and in all its power is a holy pastoral responsibility; it is, moreover, the most sublime service we can render."²⁸

²⁸ Pope John Paul II, Address to the Catholic Bishops of the United States on their *Ad Limina* visit (November 9, 1978).

Question 3

Did Pope Paul VI have the authority to revise the Roman Missal and make the New Order of the Mass normative for Catholics of the Roman Rite in place of the “Tridentine Mass”?

The Pope’s authority over the regulation of the liturgy and the administration of the sacraments stems from his supreme authority over the Church in general. It stems, in other words, from what is called his primacy (supremacy in governing the Church), which the First Vatican Council *defined* every bit as definitely as it defined the Pope’s infallibility (divine protection against the possibility of teaching error when defining matters of faith and morals in his capacity as supreme Pastor in the Church).

This primacy, which the successors of the Apostle Peter have always possessed over the Church, was promised by Jesus Christ Himself in the famous incident at Caesarea Philippi when, after Simon Bar Jonah’s profession of faith in Christ as the Son of the living God, the same Christ renamed him Peter, “the Rock.” Jesus declared He would build His Church on him, and further committed specific powers into his hands to be passed on to his successors: Peter was given “the keys of the kingdom of heaven” and the power of “binding” and “loosing” on earth (cf. Mt 16:13-20).

From the earliest times, the successors of Peter as Bishop of Rome, where the prince of the apostles had installed himself and where he was martyred, exercised this primacy over the other “Churches” established by the other apostles and their helpers. Before the end of the first century, we already find Pope Clement I intervening in the affairs of the Church at Corinth, where some of the laity, dissatisfied with their bishops, had taken it upon themselves to try to depose them from office!¹

At the great ecumenical council held at Ephesus in Asia Minor, in the year AD 431, Philip, the Papal Legate at the Council, spoke to the great assembly of bishops of the Roman primacy over the Church as if the fact of this primacy were already the most familiar of facts about the Catholic Church that might ever occur to anyone:

No one doubts, nay it is a thing known for centuries, that the holy and most blessed Peter, the prince and head of the

1 Neuner and Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, p. 463.

Apostles, the pillar of faith and the foundation on which the Catholic Church is built, received from Our Lord, Jesus Christ, the savior and redeemer of the human race, the keys of the kingdom, and that to him there was given the power of binding and of loosing from sin; who, down to this day, and for evermore, lives and exercises judgment in his successors.²

The same thing has been true down to *this* day; it would be hard to improve upon this formulation of the papal primacy by this papal legate, Philip. Nevertheless, nearly fifteen hundred years after the Council of Ephesus, the Fathers of the First Vatican Council in 1870 saw fit to define dogmatically the papal primacy over the Church, as follows:

We teach and declare . . . that by the disposition of the Lord, the Roman Church possesses preeminence of ordinary power above all the Churches; and that this power of jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff, which is truly episcopal, is immediate. This power obligates shepherds and faithful of every rite and dignity, both individually and collectively, to hierarchical subordination and true obedience, *not only in matters pertaining to faith and morals, but also in those pertaining to the discipline and government of the Church throughout the world*; so that by maintaining with the Roman Pontiff unity of communion and unity in the profession of the same faith, the Church of Christ may be one flock under one supreme Shepherd. This is the teaching of Catholic truth. No one can deviate from it without danger to faith.³

Further along, the Fathers of Vatican I declare that “a decision of the Apostolic See, whose authority has no superior, may be revised by no one, nor may anyone examine judicially its decision.” Finally, the Council

2 As quoted in Hughes, *The Church in Crisis*, p. 64.

3 First Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution of the Church of Christ *Pastor Aeternus* (July 18, 1870), chap. 3, nos. 2–4. For the full text of *Pastor Aeternus*, see Broderick, *Documents of Vatican Council I*, pp. 53–63. Also available online at www.ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/V1.HTM#6. (Emphasis added).

Fathers at Vatican I also decided to formulated the whole doctrine in a canon with anathema attached:

If anyone should say that the Roman Pontiff has merely the function of inspection or direction but not full and supreme power of jurisdiction over the whole Church, *not only in matters pertaining to faith and morals, but also in matters pertaining to the discipline and government of the Church throughout the entire world*, or that he has only the principal share, but not the full plenitude of this supreme power; or that this power of his is not ordinary and immediate over all Churches and over each individual Church, over all shepherds and all the faithful, and over each individual one of these: let him be anathema.⁴

This teaching of Vatican Council I on papal primacy, less well known and understood than the same Council's definition of papal infallibility, may come as a surprise especially to those who hold that, while Catholics have to follow the teaching of the Pope in faith and morals ("because he is infallible"), we do not necessarily have to follow his merely disciplinary decisions and enactments. We have seen, in the answer to Question 2, that such a view is wrong with regard to the decrees of a general council. The language of Vatican I quoted here shows that it is also wrong with regard to the decrees of a pontiff.

Vatican II, incidentally, both repeats the same teaching on the supreme power of the pope to govern the whole Church, and amplifies the teaching, especially with respect to how the Roman primacy over the Church is exercised in conjunction with the authority of the bishops throughout the world.⁵ The consistency with which this same idea recurs in Church documents reinforces the conclusion that it represents the authentic Catholic Tradition in the matter.

So then, the pope has general authority over the whole Church, but does that mean, specifically, that he could revise the Roman Missal substituting the New Order of the Mass for the Tridentine Mass? That, after all, is the specific question under review here.

⁴ Ibid., chap. 3, no. 9. (Emphasis added).

⁵ Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, nos. 18, 22.

We shall deal in later sections (Questions 4 and 5) with specific objections that have been raised about the authority of the pope to establish the New Order of the Mass in place of the old Tridentine Mass. Here we have to establish that: (1) the Church does have the authority and can indeed “change” certain externals in the form or manner of the liturgy or the sacraments including the Mass (and such externals are all that have been changed in the New Order of the Mass); and that (2) the pope, possessing supreme authority over the whole Church, as we have already seen, also possesses supreme authority over the manner in which the Mass and the other sacraments are to be celebrated or administered, changed in their externals, or retained intact.

What, then, is the teaching of the Church on these two points?

The great Council of Trent explicitly recognized that the Church can, for the good of the faithful, make changes in the liturgy or sacraments, provided their substance is preserved. In the Council’s exact words:

In the dispensation of the sacraments, provided their substance is preserved, the Church has always had the power to determine or change, according to circumstances, times and places, what she judges more expedient for the benefit of those receiving them or for the veneration of the sacraments.⁶

In his 1947 encyclical *Mediator Dei*, Pope Pius XII also explicitly recognized that “as circumstances and the needs of Christians warrant, public worship is organized, developed and enriched by *new* rites, ceremonies and regulations.”⁷ According to Pius XII, the hierarchy of the Church “has not been slow—keeping the substance of the Mass and sacraments carefully intact—to modify what it deemed not altogether fitting, and to add what appeared more likely to increase the honor paid to Jesus Christ and the august Trinity, and to instruct and stimulate the Christian people to greater advantage.”⁸

It is clear, then, that the Church possesses from God the authority to make the changes she deems fitting in the externals, or human components,

6 Council of Trent, Twenty-First Session, in Neuner and Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, pp. 353-354.

7 Pope Pius XII, On the Sacred Liturgy *Mediator Dei* (November 20, 1947), no. 22. Available online at www.papalencyclical.net. (Emphasis added).

8 Pope Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*, no. 49.

of the liturgy and the sacraments. When Vatican II recommended the changes in the Mass that later became the New Order of the Mass, therefore, the Council was in no way departing from the Tradition of the Church as explicitly recognized by the Council of Trent and Pope Pius XII, long before Vatican II.

Moreover, in revising the Roman Missal at the behest of the Council, substituting the New Order of the Mass for the Tridentine Mass, Pope Paul VI was exercising a power which Pope Pius XII recognized in *Mediator Dei* as indeed being vested in the Pope alone: “The Sovereign Pontiff alone enjoys the right to recognize and establish any practice touching the worship of God, to introduce and approve new rites, as also to modify those he judges to require modifications.”⁹

We may surely conclude then that it was in the legitimate exercise of his supreme authority as the successor of Peter that Pope Paul VI issued, on April 3, 1969, his Apostolic Constitution on the Roman Missal *Missale Romanum*, replacing the Tridentine Mass with a New Order of the Mass. In this Apostolic Constitution, Paul VI himself notes that, in revising the Roman Missal at the request of Vatican II, he is doing exactly what Pope Saint Pius V did when he revised the Roman Missal at the request of the Council of Trent. Because of the central importance of this Apostolic Constitution of Pope Paul VI, we are publishing the full text of it in Appendix I.

In a General Audience on November 19, 1969, the Pope carefully explained to the world what he was doing in issuing *Missale Romanum*, and he further emphasized its obligatory nature for all the faithful. In this General Audience, the Holy Father made clear that the changes in no way affected the substance of the Holy Sacrifice—which the Church had no power to change—but consisted of “new directions for celebrating the rites.” He titled his address, significantly, “The Mass is the Same.”

How much grief could have been avoided if only more attention had been paid at the time to what the Pope was saying. Arguments continued to rage for nearly a decade about whether in fact the Tridentine Mass had been replaced or whether the New Order as established was binding on the faithful. But then it was one of the tragedies of the pontificate of Pope Paul VI that some of his words were so little heeded, on all sides. Nevertheless it is worth quoting the reasons why he was changing some of the externals

⁹ Ibid., no. 58.

which surrounded the celebration of the Mass and about how “binding” this change was upon the faithful.

In his General Audience of November 19, 1969, then, the Holy Father declared that:

We wish to draw your attention to an event about to occur in the Latin Catholic Church: the introduction of the liturgy of the new rite of the Mass. . . . The Mass will be celebrated in a rather different manner from that in which we have been accustomed to celebrate it in the last four centuries, from the reign of Saint Pius V, after the Council of Trent, down to the present.

How could such a change be made? Answer: It is due to the will expressed by the Ecumenical Council held not long ago. The Council decreed: “The rite of the Mass is to be revised in such a way that the intrinsic nature and purpose of its several parts, as also the connection between them, can be more clearly manifested, and that devout and active participation by the faithful can be more easily accomplished. For this purpose the rites are to be simplified, while due care is taken to preserve their substance. Elements which, with the passage of time, came to be duplicated, or were added with but little advantage, are now to be discarded. Where opportunity allows or necessity demands, other elements which have suffered injury through accidents of history are now to be restored to the earlier norm of the holy Fathers” (SC, 50). The reform which is about to be brought into being is therefore a response to an authoritative mandate from the Church.

It is not an arbitrary act. It is not a transitory or optional experiment. It is not some dilettante’s improvisation. *It is a law.*¹⁰

Because of the importance of the Pope’s own explanations contained in the General Audience cited above and in the General Audience of November 26, 1969, we are reprinting both in full in Appendix II.

¹⁰ Pope Paul VI, General Audience (November 19, 1969). Available online at www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/P6601119.HTM. (Emphasis added).

Question 3: Did Pope Paul VI Have the Authority?

In summary, Pope Paul VI did have the authority to revise the Roman Missal and thus to replace the Tridentine Mass with the *Novus Ordo* in the Roman Rite. He had the authority to do this; it was his intention to do it; and he did do it—as we shall see further in answering other questions that have been raised on this subject.

The only question that remains, and must puzzle well-instructed Catholics who understand what legitimate authority in the Church entails and what our obligations are toward it, is the question of why so many continue to believe that they may remain Catholics in good standing while rejecting the Pope's revision of the Roman Missal. Some argue that the infallibility of the Pope was not invoked in the replacement of the Tridentine Mass by the *Novus Ordo* and, therefore, they need not accept the change. Others claim that the whole thing involves discipline only and does not touch upon faith and morals and hence for this reason they need not obey the pope. Some, inconsistently, attempt to combine elements of both of those arguments.

We have already treated this same question with regard to the assent and obedience owed by the Catholic faithful to the enactments of a general council (Question 2). The answer found there is the same as regards the assent and obedience required of the faithful to the teachings and directives of a pope. The faithful may not reject authentic Church teachings or disciplinary measures even though they may honestly judge them to be detrimental to the best interests of the Church.

In his landmark 1864 encyclical *Quanta Cura*, Pope Pius IX actually censured the idea that the faithful could disregard Church discipline on the grounds that it did not concern "faith and morals." The Pontiff censured those:

. . . . who, not enduring sound doctrine, contend that "without sin and without any sacrifice of the Catholic profession assent and obedience may be refused to those judgments and decrees of the Apostolic See, whose object is declared to concern the Church's general good and her rights and discipline, so only it does not touch the dogmata of faith and morals."¹¹

11 Pope Pius IX, Condemning Current Errors *Quanta Cura* (December 8, 1864), no. 5. Available online at www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius09/p9quanta.htm.

“No one can fail to see,” Pius IX added, “that this doctrine *directly opposes Catholic dogma* according to which Christ our Lord with His divine authority gave to the Roman Pontiff the supreme power of shepherding, ruling, and governing the Church.”¹² Note that Pius IX declares that any attempt to evade Church discipline on the ground that faith and morals are not involved goes contrary to Catholic *doctrine*. It is part of Catholic “faith and morals,” in other words, that Catholics must obey disciplinary decrees of the Holy See.

In 1873, Pope Pius IX taught that “it is as contrary to the divine constitution of the Church as it is to perpetual and constant tradition for anyone to attempt to prove the catholicity of his faith and truly call himself a Catholic when he fails in obedience to the Apostolic See.”¹³

Pope Pius IX has here placed the seal of the Magisterium upon the teaching that obedience is owed to the Vicar of Christ. Of course, historically, this was also the common opinion of Catholic theologians. Saint Robert Bellarmine, for example, writes apropos of the same question “that the Pope with General Council cannot err, either in framing decrees of faith or general precepts of morality; [and] . . . that the Pope when determining anything in a doubtful matter, . . . whether it is possible for him to err or not, is to be obeyed by all the faithful.”¹⁴

Thus, according to Saint Robert Bellarmine, no Catholic can withdraw his acceptance of the *Novus Ordo* on the grounds that the pope was gravely mistaken in instituting it—even if this latter contention were proved to be true.

Cardinal John Henry Newman endorses the opinion of Saint Robert Bellarmine in language that goes right to the heart of all the controversies today over whether Catholics must accept the New Order of the Mass. Cardinal Newman writes:

I say with Cardinal Bellarmine whether the Pope be infallible or not in any pronouncement, anyhow he is to be obeyed. No good can come from disobedience. His facts and his warnings may be all wrong; his deliberations may be biased.

12 Pius IX, *Quanta Cura*, no. 5. (Emphasis added).

13 Pope Pius IX, On the Church in Armenia *Quartus Supra* (January 6, 1873), no. 3. Available online at www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius09/p9quartu.htm.

14 Robert Bellarmine as quoted in John Henry Cardinal Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1968), p. 87. Also available online at www.newmanreader.org/works/development/chapter2.html.

Question 3: Did Pope Paul VI Have the Authority?

He may have been misled. Imperiousness and craft, tyranny and cruelty, may be patent in the conduct of his advisers and instruments. But when he speaks formally and authoritatively he speaks as our Lord would have him speak, and all those imperfections and sins of individuals are overruled for that result which our Lord intends (just as the action of the wicked and of enemies to the Church are overruled) and therefore the Pope's word stands, and a blessing goes with obedience to it, and no blessing with disobedience.¹⁵

We in no way have to accept that the pope, in revising the Roman Missal, was guilty of any of the faults Cardinal Newman mentions. Newman is deliberately posing the worst possible case in order to more forcibly make his point that the Pope does have to be obeyed in his official enactments as Vicar of Christ.

With these characteristically definite words of the great English Cardinal we may fittingly close our discussion of this question. Having established here the general proposition that the Pope must be obeyed, in Question 8 we will show specifically the obligation of Roman Rite Catholics to accept the replacement of the Tridentine Mass by the *Novus Ordo* Mass. Here our conclusions are that: (1) Pope Paul VI did have the authority to institute the New Order of the Mass through his revision of the Roman Missal, and to make it normative for Catholic worship in the Roman Rite; (2) the Pope did, in fact, do this; and (3) Catholics of the Roman Rite are obliged to obey and follow his enactments as being authoritative directives in the matter from the Holy See, implicitly accepted and continued by the popes who have followed him (see also Question 8).

Finally, after Pope John Paul II became pope, he specifically said the faithful must follow the liturgical discipline currently in force—the New Order of the Mass—when he declared the day after his election in his speech to the Cardinals that “fidelity . . . implies the observance of the liturgical norms laid down by ecclesiastical authority.”¹⁶

15 Ward, *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman*, p. 193.

16 Pope John Paul II, To the Cardinals and to the World *Urbi et Orbi* address.

Question 4

Didn't Pope Saint Pius V, in his Apostolic Constitution *Quo Primum*, issued in 1570, establish the Tridentine Mass for all time?

Pope Saint Pius V's Apostolic Constitution *Quo Primum* has figured so prominently in the controversy surrounding the New Order of the Mass versus the Tridentine Mass that we are reprinting this 1570 document in its entirety in Appendix III. Reading over this sixteenth century ecclesiastical document today, we cannot but be impressed.

It clearly is a disciplinary document. Pope Saint Pius V is not engaged in defining doctrine about the Mass; he is concerned with establishing a uniform discipline throughout the Roman Rite with regard to the manner of celebrating Mass.

Thus *Quo Primum* does not involve the issue of the pope's infallibility; it is not a statement dealing with faith and morals which could never be reversed by virtue of having been issued *ex cathedra* by a pope acting in his capacity as shepherd and teacher of all Christians or by other ways in which the pope could exercise his infallibility. Rather, it is a disciplinary document in which the pope is at pains to insure that the new revision of the Roman Missal which he is promulgating will be followed everywhere that the Roman Rite is celebrated. This is evident from the language of the text. The pope devotes as much space to specifying how the new Roman Rite is to be celebrated and as much space to specifying how the new Roman Missal is to be printed and publicized throughout the Church—even getting into the difference between priests south of the Alps or beyond the Alps and the time required to transmit messages in those days—as he does to the points which some have interpreted to mean that this document establishes a particular discipline of the Mass once and for all.

We can deduce that this was not the pope's intention because, assisted by his commission—"learned men of our selection"—he was engaged in extensively revising the discipline of celebrating Mass of his own time at the behest of the Council of Trent—just as, four hundred years later, Pope Paul VI would embark upon a similar revision of the Roman Missal at the behest of another general council, Vatican II. Surely Pope Saint Pius V could not have believed that the manner and form of Catholic worship can never be changed, for the simple reason that he was himself engaged in doing just

that. In *Quo Primum* he even calls his revised Missal a “new rite.” He says it was his intention to “revise and re-edit the sacred books.”

These facts about what Pope Saint Pius V really did in *Quo Primum* are not affected by asserting that his revision substantially preserved the canon of the Mass which went all the way back to Saint Gregory the Great. Paul VI’s revision of the Roman Missal in 1969 also “substantially” preserved this same canon in the First Eucharistic Prayer.

Seeing how difficult it has been in our day for some to accept the Roman Missal as revised by Pope Paul VI, we can surely understand how concerned Pope Saint Pius V was to ensure that his own prescriptions should be obeyed everywhere at a time when bishops, priests, and the faithful were not even accustomed to a uniform rite of Mass. Indeed, that was what Pope Saint Pius V was trying to establish. And much of the strong language in *Quo Primum* was directed against those who might presume to go on celebrating their own local form of the Mass instead of accepting the revised Roman Missal which he was promulgating by the Apostolic Constitution.

If we read *Quo Primum* carefully we will see that Pope Saint Pius’ command that “no one whosoever is to be forced or coerced to alter this Missal” is intended to protect those priests wishing to follow the pope against, say, a local bishop or religious superior desirous of continuing one of the local forms of the Mass which Pope Saint Pius V was endeavoring to suppress. This language is quite clearly not directed against a subsequent pope who might issue *his* Apostolic Constitution on the Mass by virtue of the same papal authority Pope Saint Pius V was exercising in issuing *Quo Primum*.

Similarly, when *Quo Primum* lists all the ecclesiastical dignitaries who are forbidden to alter the Missal he is establishing—“patriarch, administrator, and all other persons of whatever ecclesiastical dignity they may be, *even* cardinals of the Holy Roman Church” (emphasis added)—he most pointedly and significantly does not mention the future *popes* whom some have imagined he intended to bind in this document. But, again, it is clear that he is not primarily addressing his successors, here or elsewhere in this disciplinary document. He is commanding and directing everybody over whom he was the supreme spiritual authority in 1570, including patriarchs and cardinals, to celebrate the Mass henceforth only as he, by virtue of his supreme authority over the liturgy and the sacraments, is now prescribing it in the revised Roman Missal.

That the primary intention of Pope Saint Pius V in *Quo Primum* is to make his reform binding upon the Church of his day—rather than to restrict

future popes in their authority to regulate the liturgy and the administration of the sacraments—can also be seen from the following comment on the effects of Saint Pius' reform, taken from the most authoritative present-day study of the history of the Mass of the Roman Rite, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*. The author, Father Joseph A. Jungmann, writes:

Such a broad and sweeping unification could never have been completely accomplished before the day of the printing press. Even as things stood, there were bound to be many doubts and problems resulting from such widely diverse conditions and local customs, not to speak of the difficulties of making the change. To handle these doubts and problems, Pope Sixtus V, by the Constitution "*Immensa*" of January 22, 1588, founded the Congregation of Rites. Its charge was to see to it that everywhere in the Latin Church the prescribed manner of celebrating Mass and performing the other functions of the liturgy were carefully followed. It had to settle doubts, to give out dispensations and privileges, and since there was always a chance of introducing new feasts, it had to provide the proper formularies for them.¹

Pope Saint Pius V thus never intended by *Quo Primum* that no further revision of the Roman Missal could ever be made, or that no other form of the Roman Mass could henceforth ever be said. This can be further seen by the fact that the saintly Pope allowed for and indeed provided for the celebration of other forms of the Mass in *Quo Primum*. For example, rites that had been followed for more than 200 years were specifically exempted from the provisions of *Quo Primum* and from the use of the Saint Pius V Roman Missal. "In this way the older orders like the Carthusians and the Dominicans were enabled to retain their ancient liturgical usages," the old *Catholic Encyclopedia* article on the subject remarks, "but the new book was accepted throughout the greater part of Europe."²

If this canonized Pope was really attempting to bind his successors and all Catholics forever after to a single, fixed form of the Roman Rite, it

1 Joseph A. Jungmann, S.J., *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development*, trans. Francis A. Brunner, C.S.S.R., rev. Charles K. Riepe (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1974), p. 105.

2 See Herbert Thurston, "Missal," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. X, p. 357. Also available online at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10354c.htm>.

is remarkable that his successors did not seem aware that they had been so bound. Long before Pope Paul VI's New Order of the Mass, there were other revisions of the Roman Missal carried out down through the years. Father Jungmann has said apropos of this:

Some real changes since the sixteenth century in the rubrics and in the text of the Missal of Pius V have resulted in certain instances from papal orders. For instance, in the new edition of the missal under Clement VIII (1604), the biblical chant pieces, which in some printings had been arbitrarily changed in favor of the new Vulgate, were restored to their original state, and new regulations were made regarding the final blessing. In another new edition of the Mass book under Urban VIII (1634), the wording of the rubrics was greatly improved and the revision of the hymns already accomplished in the breviary was carried out also in the few hymns of the missal. No new edition with any notable changes came out till that of 1920 which contained the revisions based on the reform of Pope Pius X. For the rest, excepting the increase in saints' feasts, very little was done to affect the arrangement of the Mass. Pope Clement XIII prescribed the Preface of the Holy Trinity for Sundays, and Pope Leo XIII ordered the prayers said after low Mass.³

The fact that few changes were made in the Missal did not mean that the popes were prohibited from making any by *Quo Primum*. A striking example of the fact that Pope Saint Pius V's successors did not understand *Quo Primum* to mean that they could never make any changes in the Missal, comes from a history of the Jesuit missionaries in China in the early seventeenth century. The Jesuits had requested the right to allow the Mass to be translated and celebrated in Chinese by Chinese priests. Although this reform never went into effect, for reasons too complicated to go into here, the fact is that the reform was *approved* by Pope Paul V in 1615.

The story is recounted in *Generation of Giants* by George H. Dunne, S.J.:

³ Jungmann, *The Mass*, p. 106.

In what must almost be a record for an institution noted for its prejudice against precipitate action, the Holy Office, in a meeting held on January 15, 1615, in the presence of Paul V in the Quirinal, granted the concessions asked for, namely, permission for priests to wear a head-piece while celebrating Mass, permission to translate the Bible into literary Chinese, permission for Chinese priests to celebrate Mass and recite the canonical hours in literary Chinese.

Evidently some uncertainty remained as to the exact terms of the concessions, for the same subject was taken up again in another meeting of the Holy Office, held on March 26, also in the presence of the Holy Father. This time Bellarmine was chairman of the board of six cardinals. A new text was drafted and approved. It was substantially the same as the earlier decree, but with some important qualifications added. It was made clear that the permission to adopt the head-piece was granted to all missionaries in China. As for the liturgy it specified that while Chinese could be used as the liturgical language, the Roman Rite was still to be followed; nor was the permission to prejudice episcopal jurisdiction if and when bishops were constituted in China. To give the highest possible authority to this decree of March 26, 1615, Pope Paul V promulgated it by the Brief *Romanae Ecclesiae Antistes*, issued on June 17, 1615.⁴

The popes, in short, did not understand *Quo Primum* to mean that they could never change the Roman Missal or allow the Mass to be celebrated in any other fashion than that prescribed by Pope Saint Pius V.

An interesting parallel to the case of the revised Missal of Pope Saint Pius V can be seen in that of the revised Roman Breviary promulgated by the same Pontiff. In 1568, in his Apostolic Constitution *Quod a Vobis*, the Pope established the new Roman Breviary with language fully as strong as the language he used in *Quo Primum*. In fact, *Quod a Vobis* contains exactly the same concluding paragraph as *Quo Primum*, warning anyone against making any change in what had been enacted.

4 George H. Dunne, S.J., *Generation of Giants: The Story of the Jesuits in China in the Last Decades of the Ming Dynasty* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1962), pp. 164-165.

Yet, in spite of that, Pope Saint Pius X, in 1911, did not hesitate to revise the Roman Breviary by means of his own Apostolic Constitution *Divino Afflatu*⁵—just as Pope Paul VI would later revise the Roman Missal by means of his Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum*. The fact that another canonized saint and a great foe of modernism did not see his saintly predecessor's prohibitions against any change as applying to *him* abundantly proves our point. Far from the same language in *Quo Primum* being a special caveat by which Pius V was permanently establishing his text of the Roman Missal, the identical paragraph to be found in both sixteenth-century documents was actually a conventional legal formula automatically attached to many documents issued by the popes. It is worth reproducing the paragraph in question, as it is found at the end of both *Quo Primum* and *Quod a Vobis*:

Therefore, no one whosoever is permitted to alter this letter or heedlessly to venture to go contrary to this notice of Our permission, statute, ordinance, command, precept, grand, indult, declaration, will, decree, and prohibition. Should anyone, however, presume to commit such an act, he should know that he will incur the wrath of Almighty God and of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul (see Appendix III).

This paragraph was so much of a conventional legal formula in the papal documents of the day that we, the authors, checking the Latin text of *Quo Primum* in the course of our research, found that this paragraph was not even reproduced in full at the end of *Quo Primum* in the collection of papal bulls which we consulted!⁶ The Latin of this paragraph begins "*Nulli ergo omnino hominum liceat hanc paginam,*" etc., but in the collection of papal bulls there is printed simply "*Nulli ergo, etc.*"—so much was this paragraph considered a mere conventional formula!

Certainly Pope Saint Pius X considered it so when he revised the Roman Breviary in 1911. He specifically says that he is ordering a "new

5 Pope Pius X, Apostolic Constitution *Divino Afflatu* (1911), in R. Kevin Seasoltz, *The New Liturgy: A Documentation 1903-1965* (NY: Herder and Herder, 1966), pp. 22-26.

6 See *Magnum Bullarium Romanum, Tomus Quintus, Pars Tertia, Roma* (1746, An. Ch. 1570), p. 116.

arrangement” of the Roman Breviary “issued by Saint Pius V and revised by Clement VIII, Urban VIII, and Leo XIII.” In doing so, this canonized pope also concluded his Apostolic Constitution *Divino Afflatu* with an ecclesiastical caveat against anyone daring to change his decision which was the established legal form to be attached to papal decree in *his* time. It is remarkably similar to the caveat in *Quo Primum*:

This we publish, declare, sanction, decreeing that these our letters always are and shall be valid and effective, notwithstanding apostolic ordinances, general and special, and everything else whatsoever to the contrary. Wherefore, let nobody infringe or temerarily oppose this page of our abolition, revocation, permission, ordinance, statute, indult, mandate and will. But if anyone shall presume to attempt this let him know that he will incur the indignation of almighty God and of his apostles the blessed Peter and Paul.⁷

It is clear that such ecclesiastical formulas do *not* mean that a pope cannot change the disciplinary decrees of a previous pope. Pope Saint Pius X did just that in *Divino Afflatu*.

Changes in the Roman Missal in this century before Vatican II have included the changes made by Pope Pius XII when, by a simple decree of a Roman Congregation, he completely revised the liturgy of Holy Week in 1955.⁸ By means of his Apostolic *Rubricarum Instructum* of July 25, 1960, Pope John XXIII changed the rubrics of both the Roman Missal and the Roman Breviary.⁹ And, of course, in a widely publicized move, Pope John also introduced the name of Saint Joseph into the prayers of the canon.¹⁰ Even prior to Vatican II the popes clearly did not see themselves bound by *Quo Primum* never to revise the Roman Missal.

Still further changes in the traditional Roman Missal were made by Pope Paul VI in 1965 and 1967 before he promulgated the revised Roman

7 Pope Pius X, *Divino Afflatu*, pp. 22-26.

8 Pope Pius XII, Decree *Maxima Redemptionis* (by the Sacred Congregation of Rites, November 16, 1955). Excerpts in *The Liturgy: Papal Teachings*, selected and arranged by the Benedictine Monks of Solesmes; trans. the Daughters of Saint Paul (Boston, MA: Saint Paul Editions, 1962), pp. 468-470. Full text in Seasoltz, *The New Liturgy*, pp. 209-218.

9 Pope John XXIII, *Rubricarum Instructum* (July 25, 1960), in *The Liturgy*, pp. 565-566.

10 Ralph M. Wiltgen, S.V.D., *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber* (NY: Hawthorne Books, 1967), pp. 45-46.

Missal by the issuance of his Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum* on April 3, 1969.¹¹

What one pope decrees in the way of liturgical or sacramental discipline, another pope can modify or revoke. It is an axiom of law that what a given authority enacts the same authority can repeal. A subsequent Congress can repeal a law passed by an earlier Congress; one president can rescind or modify an executive order issued by an earlier president. These are illustrations taken from the civil realm, but their logic applies equally to ecclesiastical law. We saw, in the answer to Question 1, how the Council of Trent modified solemn decrees of earlier councils. Similarly, Paul VI, possessing the same papal authority as his predecessor Pope Saint Pius V, repealed the Apostolic Constitution *Quo Primum* by the fact of issuing a subsequent Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum*, covering exactly the same subject matter, namely, the Roman Missal.

The fact of the repeal would, as we have said, be axiomatic in law, but, in any case, the principle is explicitly recognized by the 1917 Code of Canon Law. Canon 22 states that “if the later law is equally general or equally particular with the former one”—and both *Quo Primum* and *Missale Romanum* are equally apostolic constitutions dealing with exactly the same subject matter, namely, the Roman Missal—“then the later law repeals the former law. . . . if it deals with the entire subject matter of the former law.”¹² This is precisely the case. (Technically, Pope Paul VI did not *abrogate* the older Roman Missal. He replaced it by the new revised Roman Missal and *derogated* the use of the older Missal to the case of aged or infirm priests allowed by their bishops to say the Tridentine Mass, but only without a congregation.)

Again, according to canon law, a later law also repeals the former one, “if it contains an explicit statement to that effect, a repealing clause.”¹³ Pope Paul VI’s Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum* both mentions (in the beginning) his predecessor’s *Quo Primum* and says (at the end) that what he is promulgating is promulgated “notwithstanding, as far as is necessary, Apostolic Constitutions and Ordinances issued by Our Predecessors and other prescriptions even those worthy of special mention and derogation.” *Quo Primum* is among the “prescriptions. . . . worthy of

11 See “Note on the Obligation to Use the New Roman Missal” *Conferentiarum Episcopaliū* (October 28, 1974), in Flannery, *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents*, pp. 281-282.

12 T. Lincoln Bouscaren, S. J., and Adam C. Ellis, S. J., *Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*, 3rd rev. ed. (Milwaukee, WI: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1957), p. 35.

13 *Ibid.*

special mention and derogation,” as, indeed, is John XXIII’s *Rubricarum Instructum* mentioned above.

Hence it becomes impossible for us to hold that Pope Saint Pius V established the Tridentine Mass for all time or that Pope Paul VI did not validly promulgate the New Order of the Mass and make it obligatory and universal in the Roman Rite through the issuance of his new Roman Missal in 1969.

But what about the explicit language in *Quo Primum* that says it is to apply “henceforth, now, and forever” and that “this present document cannot be revoked or modified”?

Two points must be understood here. First, terms such as “forever” and “in perpetuity” in ecclesiastical documents refer to enactments that are to last *indefinitely*. That is, no specific date or time is set in advance (such as the death of the pope) when they will automatically lapse. They thus remain in force until subsequently modified or repealed by legitimate authority. For example, when Clement XIV, in his brief *Dominus ac Redemptor*, dated July 21, 1773, suppressed the Society of Jesus, he declared that this measure should be “*perpetuo validas*.” This in no way prevented his successor Pius VII from re-establishing the Society of Jesus, in his *Sollicitudo Omnium* of August 7, 1814.¹⁴ The mere use of the term “perpetual” did not mean that a subsequent pope no longer had the authority to revive the religious order which the previous pope had dissolved. “Perpetual” merely means here until some further legitimate enactment is carried out by a sovereign pontiff. It is worthy of note that Paul VI himself begins his Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum* with the formula “*Ad perpetuam rei memoriam*,” “For a perpetual record” (see Appendix I). This salutation is common in papal documents. In his document, Pope Saint Pius V merely forbade his constitution from being “revoked or modified” by any lower authority not competent to modify or revoke it, even “cardinals of the Holy Roman Church,” until a subsequent pope might review or modify his decision.

Moreover, the pope specified that *Quo Primum* is to “remain always valid and retains its full force, notwithstanding any *previous* constitutions and decrees of the Holy See” (emphasis added). The pope quite properly did not specify that his apostolic constitution could never be modified by any

14 John W. Flanagan, S.T.L., D.C.L., as quoted in *Catholic Priest’s Association Newsletter*, vols. 1-2, 1973, p. 48.

subsequent constitutions or by a future pope because any future pope would enjoy exactly the same authority in the matter that he himself enjoyed.

The real intention and force of *Quo Primum* as a disciplinary document issued by the supreme authority in the Church was, in fact, simply *assumed* by a subsequent pope, Gregory XVI. In a reference to *Quo Primum*, this pope described the document as meaning exactly what we have interpreted it above as meaning. One of the principal intentions of Pope Saint Pius V in *Quo Primum* was to see that his revised Roman Missal was put into use everywhere that the Roman Rite was celebrated. Pope Gregory XVI assumed this primary meaning when he wrote in 1842:

Nothing would be more desirable than to see observed by all those under your care and in every place the constitutions of Saint Pius V, our Predecessor of immortal memory, who wished that *no one should be dispensed from the obligation of adopting the Breviary and the Missal* published, according to the mind of the Council of Trent for the use of the Roman Rite, except those who for over two centuries had used a different Breviary or Missal.¹⁵

We should understand the language of *Quo Primum* as Pope Gregory XVI understood it, namely, as firmly establishing a uniform Roman Missal wherever the Roman Rite was celebrated, not as attempting to fix one particular version of the Roman Missal for all time. The article on the Mass in the old *Catholic Encyclopedia*, published during the reign of Pope Saint Pius X, similarly describes the effect of *Quo Primum* as the establishment of “uniformity in the Roman Rite and the abolition of nearly all the medieval variants.”¹⁶ There was no thought in this article that *Quo Primum* might have been intended to foreclose any future changes in the rite of the Mass, especially since the article documents in some detail the many, many changes made in the manner of celebrating the Rite since Christ instituted it at the Last Supper—changes which can be verified by any reader by referring to such standard modern works as Father Jungmann’s *The Mass of the Roman Rite* quoted above.

15 Gregory XVI, to the Archbishop of Rheims *Studium Pio* (August 16, 1842), in *The Liturgy*, 121-122. (Emphasis added).

16 See Adrian Fortescue, “Mass, Liturgy of the,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. IX, p. 798. Also available online at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09790b.htm>.

Question 5

Even if we admit that Pope Paul VI had the authority to revise the Roman Missal to replace the Tridentine Mass by the New Order of the Mass, isn't it nevertheless true that the Pope did not follow proper canonical form in making this change? Isn't it therefore still licit to say the Tridentine Mass?

The answer to the previous question (4) really made quite clear that Pope Paul VI licitly established the revised Roman Missal in his Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum*, thereby replacing the older Roman Missal containing the Tridentine Mass. In answer to the above questions, however, we will deal with some of the specific objections which have often been raised to question whether the Pope in fact acted properly and canonically in replacing the Tridentine Mass by the New Order of the Mass.

An objection frequently leveled against Pope Paul's Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum* (see Appendix I for the full text), is that this document nowhere expressly states that the Tridentine Mass is abrogated. It is worth noting in this connection that nowhere in *Quo Primum*, either, was it expressly stated that the various local missals that were to be replaced by Pope Saint Pius V's new Roman Missal were to be abrogated. Saint Pius, in promulgating a new Missal, seems to have assumed that it was evident that he did not wish the rites he was replacing to continue since he was taking such pains to establish the Mass that he did want to be uniform in the Roman Rite. Perhaps Pope Paul VI could be pardoned for doing exactly what his saintly predecessor did in this matter.

However, with regard to the claim that the Tridentine Mass is not expressly mentioned and abrogated, it is necessary to describe exactly what Pope Paul was doing in issuing this Apostolic Constitution and why the term "Tridentine Mass" did not have to be expressly mentioned. "Tridentine Mass" is not a legal, technical, or official title for the Mass formerly celebrated throughout the Roman Rite; it is simply a popular term for the rite of Mass formerly contained in the Roman Missal established by Pope Saint Pius V, who similarly made no mention of any "Tridentine Mass." This Roman Missal was changed and modified to some extent, as we have seen (Question 4), by some popes subsequent to Saint Pius V.

In his 1969 Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum*, Pope Paul was addressing himself to the question of the revision of this Roman Missal; he did not say that a former liturgy, the “Tridentine Mass,” was being abolished and replaced by a new and different liturgy. Rather the whole thrust of his words was that the Mass of the Roman Rite, popularly called the Tridentine Mass, was being modified and changed in some of its external features by means of certain additions, subtractions, and alterations in the Roman Missal; and that this revised version of the Mass of the Roman Rite, now known as the “New Order of the Mass,” was henceforth to be the official Mass of the Roman Rite. It was not really necessary for Pope Paul VI to mention the “Tridentine Mass” and then abrogate it; he was not really “abrogating” anything; he was revising the Roman Missal, and establishing this revision as henceforth the normative Mass for Catholics of the Roman Rite.

The older, unrevised Roman Missal (the “Tridentine Mass”) was published in its last edition on January 27, 1965, with still further variations introduced on May 18, 1967, prior to the general revision which would result in the “New Order of the Mass.”¹ When Pope Paul issued *Missale Romanum* promulgating this general revision, the further use of the older, unrevised version of the Missal (the “Tridentine Mass”) was *derogated*, not abrogated. That is, its use was henceforth to be limited to aged and infirm priests celebrating without a congregation, as allowed by their bishops.² And Pope Paul did thus derogate *Quo Primum*; and with this express language:

We will that these our statutes and prescriptions by now and in the future firm and efficacious notwithstanding, as far as is necessary, Apostolic Constitutions and Ordinances issued by Our Predecessors and other prescriptions even those worthy of special mention and derogation. (See Appendix I for full text.)

These “other prescriptions . . . worthy of special mention and derogation” included, precisely, *Quo Primum*; *Quo Primum* is mentioned by name, both in the text and the notes of Paul VI’s *Missale Romanum*; hence it is clearly included in what is derogated at the end.

1 *Conferentiarum Episcopatum*, in Flannery, *Vatican Council II*, pp. 281-282.

2 *Conferentiarum Episcopatum*, pp. 281-282.

Thus, to speak of the Tridentine Mass not having been expressly abrogated, is to get off the track. The assertion is not a solid objection to the procedure followed by Pope Paul VI; it misses the point.

Similarly, the idea that Paul VI was establishing a parallel rite alongside of which the “Tridentine Mass” could continue to be said is inexact. The “Tridentine Mass” and the “New Order of the Mass” constitute different versions of the *same* Roman Missal, the latter version of which is now normative for Catholics of the Roman Rite, while the use of the former version is lawfully limited to cases of aged and infirm priests celebrating alone, and also to the case of the papal indult granted to the bishops of England and Wales to allow them to permit Masses to be celebrated from the older, unrevised Roman Missal under certain circumstances.³

A further, common objection, denying that Pope Paul VI acted lawfully and according to proper canonical form in revising the Missal, has been raised with the phrase quoted above from *Missale Romanum*: “We will that these our statutes and prescriptions be now and in the future firm and efficacious.” Some say that the expression, “we will” (Latin: “*volummus*”), translated also “we wish,” or “it is our will,” indicates only a wish or desire of the Pope, but not a firm command from the Chair of Peter binding upon all the faithful. We might wonder why a pope would go to the trouble to issue an apostolic constitution only to express a wish or desire. And in fact, that is not what Pope Paul VI did.

Canonists agree that the public expression of the will of the legislator makes an enactment into a law binding upon those subject to it. In fact, the expression “*volummus*,”—“we will” or “we wish”—is precisely the language used in other recent apostolic constitutions issued by the Holy See, for example, the Apostolic Constitution on the Revision of Indulgences *Indulgentiarum Doctrina* of January 1, 1967, and the Apostolic Constitution on the Election of the Roman Pontiff *Romano Pontifici Eligendo* of October 13, 1975.⁴ To

3 A much broader “indult” for the celebration of the Tridentine Mass—technically, “the use of the Roman Missal according to the typical edition of 1962”—was granted by *Quattuor Abhinc Annos*, issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship on October 3, 1984, and expanded and extended by Pope John Paul II’s Apostolic Letter *Ecclesia Dei* of July 2, 1988. These two documents are discussed further in the Addendum to this Question, as well as in the Answer to Question 18 and in the Afterword. They are also included in this volume as Appendices V and VI. The fact that the permission granted is for the use of an earlier edition of the Roman Missal underlines the point that we are not talking about two different “rites” here, but about an earlier normative version of the Roman Rite and a later, revised edition of the same rite.

4 *Indulgentiarum Doctrina*, in Flannery, *Vatican Council II*, pp. 62-79. For the text of *Romano Pontifici Eligendo*, see *L’Osservatore Romano* (English, November 20, 1975), pp. 1-7.

doubt that the pope means what he says when he issues such documents, merely because he chooses a particular word, the meaning of which is nevertheless clear, or that, while possessing full authority to legislate on the matters in question, which nobody denies, he inexplicably and by a mere form of words does not bring his full authority into play, is a peculiar way of understanding the exercise of authority.

Stressing the fact that, in any stable order, the acts of authority must be received by those subject to it—otherwise everything can be called into question all the time, something that can scarcely be desired by any calling or considering themselves “conservatives” or “Traditionalists.” Pope Saint Pius X decreed that acts from the Holy See would be considered legitimately promulgated when they appeared in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, the official “journal” of the Holy See:

We will it that Pontifical Constitutions, laws, decrees and other notifications emanating from the Supreme Pontiffs as well as Sacred Congregations and Offices be inserted and published in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* and for this precise reason, that they be considered legitimately promulgated each time a promulgation is made of the matter has not been otherwise disposed by the Holy See.⁵

Surely then it is sufficient for Pope Paul VI to have promulgated his apostolic constitutions in this manner for Catholics to be confident that they have been validly promulgated.

Further, to the question of whether the will (or “wish”) of the superior is binding regardless of whether it is promulgated in a specific form, we may cite Saint Thomas Aquinas as another authority. Aquinas tells us that the specific object of obedience “is a command tacit or express; because the superior’s will, *however it becomes known*, is a tacit precept.”⁶ In other words, provided he makes known what he wants in a fashion that is unmistakable, the superior’s command *does* bind those subject to his authority; in other words, the superior is *not* obliged to follow any particular form or to use any particular words in issuing his orders.

5 Pope Saint Pius X, Apostolic Constitution *Promulgandi* (September 29, 1906), in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* I (1909), p. 5. Also quoted in Bishop Leo Blais, *Les Messes de la Nouvelle Liturgie*.

6 Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, second pt., pt. 2, ques. 104, article 2. (Emphasis added).

Thus regardless of whether or not Pope Paul VI followed proper canonical form in his *Missale Romanum*, as some Traditionalists claim, we do know his will in the matter of the New Order of the Mass for the simple reason that more than once he made it clear. Surely the Pope himself was the best judge of what he meant by the words he used. "It is a law," he said of his reform of the Missal in his General Audience of November 19, 1969 (see full text in Appendix II).

In his Address to the Consistory of Cardinals on May 24, 1976, Pope Paul VI further made clear his intention in issuing his Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum*. Regardless of the form in which it was issued, the Pope quite clearly said: "The new *Ordo* was promulgated to take the place of the old, after mature deliberation, following upon the requests of the Second Vatican Council. In no different way did our holy predecessor Pius V make obligatory the Missal reformed under his authority, following the Council of Trent."⁷

The will of the Supreme Pontiff who revised the Roman Missal is thus clear beyond any shadow of a doubt. Since it is clear, his will constitutes for Catholics a "tacit precept," as Saint Thomas Aquinas says.⁸ Barring a new enactment by a subsequent pope, the New Order of the Mass remains the official Mass for Catholics of the Roman Rite. It is, therefore, *not* still licit to celebrate the Tridentine rite without an indult from the Holy Father.

The Holy See, in fact, issued a "Note on the Obligation to Use the Roman Missal" on October 28, 1974, which, while it no doubt by itself did not repeal the previous law in force regarding the Roman Missal, at any rate certainly again made clear the intentions of the Pope when he promulgated his new, revised Missal.

Upon his election as Pope, John Paul II further declared in his first *urbi et orbi* address that the New Order of the Mass was lawfully established when he said, "Fidelity . . . implies the observance of the liturgical norms laid down by ecclesiastical authority and therefore has nothing to do with the practice either of introducing innovations of one's own accord and without approval or of obstinately refusing to carry out what has been lawfully laid down and introduced into the sacred rites."⁹

7 Pope Paul VI, "Address to the Consistory of Cardinals" (May 24, 1976), in *L'Osservatore Romano* (English edition, June 3, 1976), pp. 1-4.

8 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*, "Of Obedience," second pt., pt. 2, ques. 104, article 2.

9 Pope John Paul II, "To the Cardinals and to the World." (Emphasis added).

Although our case is established, we mention here one other objection to Pope Paul's having lawfully replaced the Tridentine Mass by the New Order of the Mass. It comes from those who consider the celebration of the Tridentine Mass an "immemorial custom," and who therefore invoke Canon 30 of the Code of Canon Law.¹⁰ This states that "a law, general or particular does not revoke customs which are centenary or immemorial, without express mention."¹¹ Some traditionalist priests have argued from this that they have a right to continue celebrating the Tridentine Mass.

However, the Tridentine Mass was never an "immemorial custom." It was established by positive Church law promulgating the Roman Missal which contained it—precisely by Pope Saint Pius V's *Quo Primum*, as Canon 22 required, and as we have already noted previously.¹² Hence the objection here, once again fails.

From everything that has been said, we cannot conclude anything but that the revised Roman Missal with the New Order of the Mass *has* been lawfully established; and that the celebration of the Tridentine Mass is forbidden except where ecclesiastical law specifically allows it.



Addendum to Question 5

As already noted, Pope John Paul II granted a much broader indulgence for the celebration of the Tridentine Mass in 1984, and, four years later, established the *Ecclesia Dei* Commission to oversee and care for those celebrating the Tridentine Mass in accordance with the expanded permission. Even today, however, it must be realized that recourse to the Tridentine Mass under conditions other than those spelled out by the authority of the Church constitutes a grave violation of Church law.

As Pope Paul VI noted:

Discredit is cast upon the authority of the Church in the name of a tradition, in which respect is professed only materially and verbally. The faithful are drawn away from the bonds of obedience to the See of Peter and to their rightful Bishops. . . . It is so painful to take note of this, but

¹⁰ See Canon 28 in the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*.

¹¹ Bouscaren and Ellis, *Canon Law*, p. 42.

¹² See Canon 20 in 1983 *Code of Canon Law*.

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how can we not see in such an attitude—whatever may be these people's intentions—the placing of themselves outside obedience and communion with the Successor of Peter and therefore outside the Church?

And this is all the more serious, in particular, when division is introduced precisely where “*congregavit nos in unum Christi amor,*” in the liturgy and the Eucharistic Sacrifice, by the refusing of obedience to the norms laid down in the liturgical sphere. It is in the name of tradition that we ask all our sons and daughters, all the Catholic communities to celebrate with dignity and fervor the renewed liturgy. The adoption of the new *Ordo Missae* is certainly not left to the free choice of priests or faithful. The Instruction of 14 June, 1971, has provided for, with the authorization of the ordinary, the celebration of the Mass in the old form only by aged and infirm priests, who offer the divine Sacrifice *sine populo*. The new *Ordo* was promulgated to take the place of the old after mature deliberation, following upon the requests of the Second Vatican Council. In no different way did our holy Predecessor Pius V make obligatory the Missal reformed under his authority, following the Council of Trent.”¹³

More on this same subject will be covered in the Afterword. Appendices IV, V, and VI are also pertinent to this subject.

¹³ Address published in *L'Osservatore Romano* (June 3, 1976).

Question 6

But doesn't the replacement of the Tridentine Mass involve the watering down or abandonment of the Catholic tradition? Can Catholics really be faulted for following the injunctions of Saint Paul, "stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught?" (2 Thess 2:15)

When we speak of the "Catholic Tradition," we have to distinguish what we mean by the term; for there is the unchangeable apostolic Tradition, and there are changeable, ecclesiastical traditions, customs, or disciplines. We must be clear as to what is unchangeable, apostolic Tradition, and what are changeable "traditions"?

Tradition, understood as the sum of revealed Catholic doctrine, is, along with Scripture, one of the twin pillars which make up the sacred deposit of revelation, on which our whole Faith is based. Obviously, Catholics—and the whole Church—must "stand firm" and "hold to" sacred Tradition understood in this sense.

Against the Protestant reformers whose slogan was *sola Scriptura*, the great Council of Trent reaffirmed the importance of Tradition when it taught:

[The] Gospel was promised of old through the prophets in the Sacred Scriptures; Our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, first promulgated it from His own lips; He in turn ordered that it be preached through the apostles to all creatures as the source of all saving truth and rule of conduct. The Council clearly perceives that this truth and rule are contained in the written books and unwritten traditions which have come down to us, having been received by the apostles from the mouth of Christ Himself, or from the apostles by the dictation of the Holy Spirit, and have been transmitted as it were from hand to hand. Following, then, the example of the orthodox Fathers, it receives and venerates with the same sense of loyalty and reverence all the books of the Old and New Testaments, for God alone is the author of both—together with all the traditions concerning faith and morals, as coming from the mouth of Christ or being inspired by

the Holy Spirit and preserved in continuous succession in the Catholic Church.¹

It is clear from the Council of Trent that Catholic Tradition is something guarded and preserved *in the Church*. Catholic Tradition, in the true sense, is not merely what we think it is or ought to be; it is, finally, what the Church decides that it is. The Church herself, not private persons, judges what belongs to the unchangeable Catholic Tradition, and what does not.

“God has given to His Church a living Teaching Authority,” Pope Pius XII taught, “to elucidate and explain what is contained in the deposit of faith only obscurely and implicitly. This deposit of faith our Divine Redeemer has given for authentic interpretation not to each of the faithful, not even to theologians, but only to the Teaching Authority of the Church.”²

Speaking of those who would presume to decide for themselves what the Catholic Tradition is and what it is not, Pope Pius IX wrote, in the language characteristic of the pontiff who convoked and presided over the First Vatican Council in 1870, as follows:

Like all the fomenters of heresy and schism, they make false boast of having kept the ancient Catholic faith while they are overturning the principal foundation of the Faith and of Catholic doctrine. They certainly recognize in Scripture and Tradition the source of Divine Revelation, but they refuse to listen to the ever-living magisterium of the Church, although this clearly springs from Scripture and Tradition, and was instituted by God as the perpetual guardian of the infallible exposition and explanation of the dogmas transmitted by these two sources. Consequently, with their false and limited knowledge, independently and even in opposition to the authority of this divinely instituted magisterium they set themselves up as judges of the dogmas contained in these sources of Revelation.³

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- 1 The General Council of Trent, Fourth Session, “Decree on Sacred Books and on Traditions to be Received” (1546), in Neuner and Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, p. 73.
 - 2 Pope Pius XII, Encyclical *Humani Generis* (August 12, 1950), in O’Gorman, *The Church*, p. 659.
 - 3 Pope Pius IX, Letter *Inter Gravissimas* (October 28, 1870), to the Episcopal Assembly at Fulda, in *The Church*, pp. 218-219.

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We should carefully note the fact that Pope Pius IX makes the Magisterium of the Church responsible for the “exposition and explanation” of sacred Tradition—just as the Magisterium has the same responsibility as regards Sacred Scripture. Thus individuals, no matter how learned or devout, are not the interpreters of Tradition.

If the Church through her sacred Magisterium is the judge of Tradition, then, it follows, *a fortiori*, that the ultimate judge is the pope, since he has the primacy over the whole Church, as defined by the First Vatican Council (see Question 3). This does not mean that the pope is above Tradition; he is rather the servant of it. However, by virtue of his office he is necessarily its ultimate judge and interpreter.

Moreover, the pope’s authority extends not merely to the dogmas handed down by Tradition in the Church but also to everything that pertains to the government of the Church committed by Christ to Peter and handed down to each of Peter’s successors in turn. Even before Vatican I, Pope Gregory XVI had made it clear that the pope’s primacy over the Church extended not only to revealed Tradition concerning faith and morals but also to Church discipline. Pope Gregory wrote:

Can private individuals lay claim to power which is proper to the Roman Pontiffs alone? Even if it were question of points of discipline which are in affect in the universal Church but are susceptible of change because they are of ecclesiastical institution, it nevertheless belongs to the Roman Pontiff alone, because Christ has put him at the head of his whole Church, to weigh the necessity of a change brought about by a new state of affairs.⁴

The voice of the Church speaks so consistently on this subject that we surely cannot doubt that the popes are the ultimate guardians both of revealed Catholic Tradition pertaining to faith and morals as well as of Church discipline, customs, and changeable “traditions” with a small “t.” But how does all this apply to the “changes in the Mass”? Do not Catholics, in fidelity to Tradition, have to stand firm and resist any effort to tamper with the Mass?

⁴ Pope Gregory XVI, Encyclical *Quo Graviora* (October 4, 1833), to the Bishops of the Rhineland, in *The Church*, p. 131. Also available online at <http://www.ewtn.com/library/ENCYC/G16QUOGR.HTM>.

The confusion which surrounds this issue is very great. Some hold that the New Order of the Mass may be opposed by Catholics because “faith and morals”—and hence the Pope’s infallibility—are *not* involved. Others seem to hold, precisely, that the supposed defects or omissions in the New Order of the Mass do involve the doctrine of the Faith, and hence the revised Missal has to be opposed for that very reason! We have dealt already with similar confusions with regard to the assent and obedience owed by Catholics to the decisions of a General Council (Question 2) and to those of a Supreme Pontiff (Question 3). We will deal in subsequent Questions with further difficulties which some have had in reconciling the New Order of the Mass with what they consider to be the Catholic Tradition and the doctrine of the Faith.

Here we only make the point that, as we have already shown (Question 3), the pope has full and supreme power of jurisdiction over the whole Church, not only in matters pertaining to faith and morals, but also in matters pertaining to the discipline and government of the Church throughout the whole world. As Catholics, we have to accept the decisions of the pope and the Holy See not only with regard to the Tradition of the doctrine of the Faith, but also with regard to what we have called changeable “traditions”—practices of worship and devotion which are related to our Faith insofar as through them we express our faith in and love towards the Divine Majesty. But they are really “customs” or “practices,” not part of Tradition which cannot be changed. Only the authentic revelation of *faith*, which came from Christ, can be considered Tradition which cannot be changed, but only understood better.

Some of those who have objected, in the name of the Catholic Tradition, to the changes in the Church since Vatican II are really objecting, not to matters of faith or to any heresy supposedly being fostered by the Church, but rather to new practices and modes of worship replacing older “customs” or “practices.” However, they consider these new practices and modes of worship incompatible with the Catholic Tradition. But—we are now obliged to point out here, based on what has been said and documented above—to the extent that they are protesting or rebelling against official liturgical enactments of the Holy See (and not against unauthorized *abuses* of actual, official Church regulations) they are, precisely, going contrary to Catholic Tradition by making themselves, rather than the Church, the judges of what is Catholic Tradition.

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The hierarchical Church is the only authentic interpreter of Catholic Tradition, whether in faith and morals, or in discipline and Catholic practice. If the Church officially approved of a particular practice—say, restricting Communion to one kind, or approving it under both kinds—it follows that what the Church approves is, by definition, compatible with the Catholic Tradition. For the Church, especially the Holy See, is the arbiter and judge of that Tradition.

And it has always been an integral part of this Catholic Tradition that it is not the function of the Catholic faithful, even of priests, theologians, or bishops, to set themselves up as judges of what the Catholic Tradition requires with regard to, say, liturgical practice, on the grounds that this only concerns discipline and not faith and morals. It is the function, rather, of the Church alone to decide such things. Pope Pius VI, in the eighteenth century, condemned as “false, temerarious, scandalous, pernicious, offensive to pious ears, [and] injurious to the Church and to the Spirit of God who guides her” the proposition of the false Synod of Pistoia (1786) that “we must distinguish . . . what concerns faith and the essence of religion from what is proper to discipline.” Pope Pius VI strongly stigmatized the idea that Catholics might “subject to scrutiny the discipline established and approved by the Church.”⁵

Pope Gregory XVI asked even more pointedly in 1833:

The Church is the pillar and foundation of truth—all of which truth is taught by the Holy Spirit. Should the church be able to order, yield to, or permit those things which tend toward the destruction of souls and the disgrace and detriment of the sacrament instituted by Christ?⁶

What seems clear from the Catholic Tradition is that we Catholics must indeed “stand firm and hold to the traditions” which we were taught; but, as Saint Paul himself adds, “by us” (2 Thess. 2:15)—in other words, by the hierarchical Church. If the Church has officially decided that certain changes in her practices and worship are desirable, and has gone on to institute them, we must, as Catholics, accept and seek to understand

5 Pope Pius VI, Apostolic Constitution *Auctorem Fidei* (August 28, 1794), in *The Church*, pp. 94-95; 343.

6 Pope Gregory XVI, *Quo Graviora*, no. 10, in *The Church*, p. 343. Also available online at <http://www.ewtn.com/library/ENCYC/G16QUOGR.HTM>.

them. If we honestly feel that these changes officially instituted by the Church could be harmful to the Faithful, we certainly have the right to present our carefully reasoned and documented views privately to those in authority. This must be done responsibly, respectfully, and always with a readiness to obey the decision of the Holy See, for it belongs to the nature of authority that the Church must have the last word in such matters, regardless of whether or not we agree with the wisdom of her ultimate judgments. Even if we do not agree with her decisions, we must trust that Christ is ultimately in charge of His Church—through His Vicar, who cannot lead the Church into perdition through any official mandate of his governing power.

The hypothesis that *all* the official changes were ill-advised, and that the Church must only suffer now because of them, is certainly not justified. We may indeed have to suffer, but then, as Catholics, we have always known that we had to suffer in this life because of our sins—to be purified of them. If our own suffering were to come about *because* of the Church, we would surely be in no worse state than our divine Savior Who “loved the Church and gave Himself up for her” (Eph. 5:25); “a servant is not greater than his Master” (Jn 13:16).

As Catholics, we know that suffering can be redemptive; as members of the Mystical Body, our suffering can, in God’s Providence, contribute to the healing of the Church’s own wounds. The Church possesses mysterious powers of regeneration, and God is able to bring good even out of the errors and abuses that have proliferated during the period when the Church has been implementing the changes called for by the Second Vatican Council.

Legitimate changes were made and to these necessary changes we may apply a saying of Pope Benedict XV: “*Non nova, sed noviter*,” he said, “Not new things, but in a new way.” Moreover, as this Pope of World War I remarked, Tradition as interpreted by the Church must “serve as the norm for those matters which are subject to change.”⁷

We must honestly concede that the changes decided by Vatican II and officially promulgated by the Holy See, especially the revised Roman Missal, do *not* represent the abandonment or watering down of Catholic Tradition, but are the *realization* of a *part* of that Tradition. It should be recalled that the authorized reforms, especially those in the liturgical sphere, were

7 Pope Benedict XV, Encyclical *Ad Beattissimi* (November 1, 1914), in *The Church*, p. 404.

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the product of a liturgical movement extending back over 100 years. Pius XII's encyclicals *Mystici Corporis* (1943) and *Mediator Dei* (1947), like Vatican II's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (1963), would have been impossible had it not been for the remarkable efforts of such liturgical scholars as Dom Gueranger, Dom Cabrol, Dom Cagin, Cardinal Pitra, Dom Leclercq, and Dom Beauduin (to mention just a few) to obtain a deeper knowledge of the history of the liturgy and a more profound understanding of the Mass as both sacrifice and sacrament. There are standard books in which can be found some of the fruits of this liturgical scholarship going back a century and more. It was inevitable that some of the discoveries in this sphere would eventually find their way into the Church's official liturgy even if there had never been any Second Vatican Council.⁸

The great Pope Saint Pius X, in *Divino Afflatu* (1911) and in *Abhinc Duos Annos* (1913), dealt with the reform of the Psalter and the Roman Breviary.⁹ Both of these papal documents were concerned with the restoration of the ancient liturgy, and indeed both were prophetic about the changes that would come. Pope Saint Pius prepared the way for the recent attempts to develop a solid Christian spirituality through encouragement of a more intense and active participation of all Catholics in the liturgy. In a 1903 *motu proprio* he urged more "active participation in the most sacred mysteries and in the public and solemn prayer of the Church."¹⁰

Thus the Pope most identified with opposition to the heresy of modernism was in favor of orderly liturgical change: so clearly, liturgical change cannot be dismissed as purely a "liberal" thing. Saint Pius X was for it, after all.

Thus, the growth of a vigorous liturgical movement seeking to unfold to the entire Church the immense liturgical treasures contained in the various Western rites (Gallican, Mozarabic, Celtic, and Ambrosian) and Eastern rites (Byzantine, Coptic, Armenian, Syriac, etc.), as well as the liturgical insights of the great Fathers of the Church, represented an effort

8 On liturgical scholarship and the liturgical movement, see, for example: Sonya A. Quitslund, *Beauduin: A Prophet Vindicated* (NY, Paramus, NJ, and Toronto, ONT: Newman Press, 1973), especially chaps. II and III; also, Louis Bouyer, *Liturgical Piety* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1955), especially chaps. I, II, IV and V; also, Josef A. Jungmann, S. J., *The Mass: An Historical, Theological and Pastoral Survey*, trans. Julian Fernandes, S. J., ed. by Mary Ellen Evans (Collegeville: MN: The Liturgical Press, 1975).

9 In *The Liturgy*, pp. 217-221; 226-227.

10 Pope Saint Pius X, *Motu Proprio, Tra le Sollecitudini* (November 22, 1903), in *The Liturgy*, p. 178.

to tap the fullness of Catholic practices and traditions to meet the spiritual needs of our own time—to penetrate further the profundities of the Paschal Mystery of Christ. As we have noted, the *Novus Ordo* of Pope Paul VI is the result of studies conducted by patristic and liturgical scholars and historians going back at least a hundred years. The Second Vatican Council merely accelerated the process, which began in the days of Pope Pius IX, and which was continued through the reigns of successive popes.

In his *motu proprio* of July 25, 1960, *Rubricarum Instructum*, a document further reforming the rubrics of both the Roman Breviary and the Roman Missal, Pope John XXIII noted:

In 1956, while the preparatory studies for the general reform of the liturgy advanced, our predecessor, Pope Pius XII, wished to hear for himself the opinion of the bishops concerning a future liturgical reform of the Roman Breviary. . . . And after having examined the matter well, We came to the decision to place before the Fathers of the future Council the fundamental principles concerning the liturgical reform and not to delay any longer the reform of the Roman Missal.¹¹

It was Pope Pius XII himself then who commissioned the preparatory work ultimately placed before the Second Vatican Council—from which issued the reforms of the Council. In one of the last acts of his life, Pope Pius XII issued an instruction on sacred music in which he explicitly recognized and encouraged the fundamental principle underlying most of the reforms recommended by the Council, namely, greater participation by the Faithful in the celebration of the Mass. “Of its nature the Mass *demand*s that all those who are present should participate, each in his own proper way,” Pius XII wrote.¹² He specifically encouraged responses, prayers, and singing by the Faithful at Mass. Thus the trends which would be acted upon by the Council and implemented in the post-conciliar liturgical reforms were already present in the thinking of Pius XII before the Council was ever convened.

11 Pope John XXIII, *Motu Proprio, Rubricarum Instructum* (July 25, 1960), in *The Liturgy*, pp. 565-568.

12 Pope Pius XII, “Instruction of the Congregation of Rites on Sacred Music and the Sacred Liturgy” (September 3, 1958), in *The Pope Speaks*, vol. 5, no. 2 (Spring, 1959), p. 223 ff.

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The *Novus Ordo* and the other post-conciliar liturgical reforms were thus hardly novel and unheard of when they came about. They represented the product of a liturgical-biblical movement seeking to use untapped riches of the Catholic Tradition; they represented the fruit of studies pursued and encouraged under seven successive pontificates. The further work of the conciliar Liturgical Commission and its sub-commissions dealing with the Mass during the proceedings of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) was in no way the result of hasty improvisations or lack of critical study. During the Council itself, there were 22 meetings of the Commission on the Liturgy, with 630 interventions made by the conciliar Fathers. At the conclusion of their deliberations, 2,147 Council Fathers voted in favor of the definitive text of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* mandating a revision of the Roman Missal, while only four voted against.¹³ On December 4, 1963, the Pope used his apostolic authority as Successor of Peter to confirm this decree on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

Incidentally, Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre did not take the floor during the discussion of the draft that became the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* at the first session of the Council. He was content to present a written text in which he spoke of ambiguities in the principles of liturgical adaptation being discussed and also ventured his opinion that authority over the liturgy should not be shared with bishops' conferences, but should remain entirely in the hands of the Pope.¹⁴

It is also important to remember that, like the Council of Trent, the Second Vatican Council was an ecumenical council of the Church, and was thus guided by the Holy Spirit in its decrees and declarations touching upon doctrinal matters (see Question 2). It is inconceivable, on Catholic principles, that such an ecumenical council, convoked and confirmed by a Pope, could or would sanction liturgical innovations that would contradict any truth of the Catholic Tradition, compromise the validity of the Eucharistic Sacrifice which our divine Lord left to us as the perpetuation in time of His sacrifice on the Cross, or otherwise go contrary to Catholic doctrine, practice, or Tradition.

Vatican II, possessing the *same* authority possessed by the Council of Trent, determined, as we have already seen in the answer to Question 3,

13 Bishop Leo Blais, *Les Messes de la Nouvelle Liturgie* (pamphlet published with the authorization of the Archbishop of Montreal, no date given), p. 3.

14 Aimé Georges Martimort, "But What Is the Mass of Pius V?" in *L'Osservatore Romano* (English edition, September 16, 1976), p. 11.

that “the rite of the Mass is to be revised in such a way that the intrinsic nature and purpose of its several parts, as well as the connection between them, may be more clearly manifested, and that devout and active participation by the faithful may be more easily achieved For this purpose the rites are to be simplified, due care being taken to preserve their substance.”¹⁵

The revision of the Roman Missal which resulted in the *Novus Ordo* was thus carried out in response to the specific request of the Council that the rite of the Mass be “simplified.”

This decision of the Council was not contrary to the Catholic Tradition, especially the Tradition of the Roman Rite, since the Roman or Latin rite has always tended towards brevity and simplicity. Writing in the old *Catholic Encyclopedia* published during the reign of Pope Saint Pius X, Father Adrian Fortescue speaks of “the characteristic Roman tendency,” evident throughout the history of the development of the rite of the Mass, “to shorten the service and leave out what had become superfluous.”¹⁶ This liturgical writer believed that the replacement by Latin of the Greek, in which even the Roman Mass was originally said, was a factor which contributed to making habitual in the subsequent history of the Roman Rite a concern that “the rites are to be simplified”—the very words of Vatican II!

“No doubt the use of Latin was a factor in the Roman tendency to shorten the prayers, leave out whatever seemed redundant in formulas, and abridge the whole service,” writes Father Fortescue. “Latin is naturally terse, compared with the rhetorical abundance of Greek. This difference is one of the most obvious distinctions between the Roman and the Eastern rites.”¹⁷

Thus, far from being “untraditional,” the revisions in the Roman Missal that Vatican II called for, and which Pope Paul VI carried out in promulgating the revised Roman Missal containing the New Order of the Mass, were actually characteristic of a long history going back to the very earliest times in the Roman Rite.

In any case, the fact that a general council of the Catholic Church called for certain changes in the rite of the Mass (just as the Council of Trent had called for the reforms that Pope Saint Pius V instituted in 1570)

15 Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 50.

16 See Fortescue, “Mass, Liturgy of the,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. IX. Also available online at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09790b.htm>.

17 *Ibid.*

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meant that the changes being called for were not contrary to the Catholic Tradition; this is so because, as we have seen, it is for the Church herself, not private persons, to decide what accords with the Catholic Tradition and what does not.

We have already quoted Pope Leo XIII to the effect that it is up to the authority of the Church to decide what accords with the Catholic Tradition (Question 1). We have quoted further pontiffs to the same similar effect. We may now, therefore, conclude this section by recalling that the Holy Office¹⁸ under Pope Pius XII, clearly stated in 1949, that “the Savior did not leave it to private judgment to explain what is contained in the deposit of faith, but to the doctrinal authority of the Church.”¹⁹ The Church is the arbiter and judge of the Catholic Tradition; thus we “stand firm and hold to traditions” which we were taught when we follow the hierarchical Church and accept her legitimate decisions.

18 The Sacred College of the Holy Office is now called the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

19 Letter of the Holy Office to the Archbishop of Boston (1949), in Neuner and Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, pp. 235-237.

Question 7

But isn't there abundant proof that the New Order of the Mass was really designed to please Protestants—to be a mere “memorial” of the Lord's Supper rather than the Holy Sacrifice the Church has always offered in the Mass?

With respect to the charge that the Mass has been reduced to a mere “memorial” as with the “Lord's Supper” of the Protestants, it must be recalled that the Church has *always* regarded the Eucharistic Sacrifice as, among other things, a “memorial.” The Council of Trent itself described the Mass as a “memorial,” since Our Lord Himself told His Apostles: “Do this as a memorial of Me” (Lk 22:19).¹ The word “memorial” must, however, be understood in the Church's understanding of the term—one that harkens back to its authentic biblical sense. This means that the Mass is not solely a commemoration of the *past* events of Christ's life, especially His Passion, death, Resurrection, and Ascension, but a memorial (“*anamnesis*” in the Greek) whereby a priest uttering the words of consecration, *brings about* or *re-presents* the same mystery which Christ brought about at the Last Supper on “the night before He suffered.” The one sacrifice of the Cross is thus rendered present, though in an unbloody manner, and the divine Victim on the Cross is *both* offerer and offered in the Church's liturgical rite.

This Catholic doctrine is worlds apart from the Protestant concept of the “Lord's Supper.” Protestants generally do not believe Christ can be made present; hence, for them there can be no sacrifice. Believing only in “the priesthood of all believers,” they reject the Catholic belief that the ordained priest offers the sacrifice for all the people in the Person of Christ. Certainly the Protestant idea of what Jesus commanded His disciples to do as a memorial of Himself is very different from the action which the Church has always carried out in the Holy Mass. And the idea that some Protestant observers at the working sessions of the Commission established in 1963 to carry out the Second Vatican Council's liturgical reforms had influenced the revision of the Roman Missal in a Protestant direction is without foundation. We can see this by examining the doctrine

¹ Council of Trent, Twenty-second Session, Doctrine on the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass (1562), in Neuner and Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, p. 402.

on the Mass actually found in the revised Roman Missal—just as we can see from the documents of Vatican II on the Mass that no Protestant influence crept in as a result of Protestant observers at the Council. Both the revised Roman Missal and the documents of Vatican II are sound and verifiably contain only Catholic doctrine.

In any case, on July 4, 1976, the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship unequivocally declared: “The Protestant observers did not participate in the composition of the texts of the new Missal.”² Discussions and consultations with Protestant observers on liturgical matters no more resulted in a consequent abandonment of the Mass as a sacrifice than other ecumenical dialogues during the Council with observers from Protestant, Eastern Orthodox, and other Eastern churches led to a rejection by the Second Vatican Council of the other specific Catholic doctrines denied by these separated brethren.

For example, the definition of the Mass contained in a document issued by the Holy See subsequent to Vatican II and connected with the reforms desired by that Council demonstrates that the traditional Catholic understanding of the Mass has in no way been changed since Vatican II, although some additional terminology has also been included (the “Lord’s Supper”) possibly to attract those Protestants who, understanding better what the Mass is, might come to accept it. Here, then, is the Church’s “definition” of the Mass, the *official* definition of the post-Vatican II Church:

Hence the Mass, the Lord’s Supper, is at the same time and inseparably:

- 1) a sacrifice in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated;
- 2) a memorial of the death and resurrection of the Lord, who said “do this in memory of me” (Lk 22:19);
- 3) a sacred banquet in which, through the communion of the Body and Blood of the Lord, the People of God share the benefits of the Paschal Sacrifice, renew the New Covenant which God has made with man once for all through the

² Bishop Leo Blais, *Les Messes de la Nouvelle Liturgie*, p. 21; also *Documentation Catholique*, no. 58 (1975), p. 649.

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Blood of Christ, and in faith and hope foreshadow and anticipate the eschatological banquet in the kingdom of the Father, proclaiming the Lord’s death “till his coming.”³

In the Foreword to the 1969 *General Instruction on the Roman Missal*—the revised Roman Missal containing the text of the New Order of the Mass—it clearly states:

The sacrificial character of the Mass was solemnly defined by the Council of Trent in accordance with the universal tradition of the Church (Session 22, September 17, 1562). The Second Vatican Council has enunciated this same teaching once again, and made this highly significant comment: “At the Last Supper our Saviour instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice of his Body and Blood. He did this in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross until he should come again; and he wished to entrust to his beloved spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection.”⁴

Speaking of how the Council’s teaching on this point finds an enduring expression in the texts of the Mass, the Foreword to the 1969 *General Instruction on the Roman Missal* goes on to describe how the priest, during the *anamnesis* (memorial or prayer of remembrance), “addresses himself to God in the name of all the people; he gives thanks to God in the name of all the people; he gives thanks to God and offers to Him in a holy and living sacrifice, the Church’s offering, the Victim whose death has reconciled man with God; he prays that the Body and Blood of Christ may be the acceptable sacrifice which brings salvation to the whole world.”

In other words, the Foreword to the *General Instruction* describes the New Order of the Mass as a sacrifice of praise, thanksgiving, propitiation, and satisfaction, thus affirming doctrines which Protestants specifically deny, namely, that the Mass is a sacrifice of propitiation and of satisfaction for our sins. The *Novus Ordo* was not designed to “please Protestants”

3 Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery *Eucharisticum Mysterium* (May 25, 1967), in Flannery, *Vatican Council II*, pp. 100-136.

4 Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, no. 47. Most of the General Instruction on the Roman Missal may also be found in Flannery, *Vatican Council II*, pp. 154-205; some detailed directives on the celebration of the Mass are omitted from this edition; the full text can be found in the front of many altar missals.

by compromising the integrity of any Catholic doctrine whatsoever. The priest offering the sacrifice functions exactly as the Church has always taught, while Protestants reject the very idea of a priest functioning in this way.

In short, the holy Mass remains the same Eucharistic Sacrifice that it has been since the time the obligation to offer it perpetually was committed by Christ to the Church. And, as we can see from the Foreword to the *General Instruction on the Roman Missal* quoted above, the Second Vatican Council itself explicitly taught the essential Catholic doctrine about the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the Mass. This may come as a surprise to those who believe that the presence of a few non-Catholic “observers” at the Council could have outweighed the promised influence of the Holy Spirit at any general council of the Catholic Church; or that such “observers” on a post-conciliar Commission could introduce Protestant ideas into the revised Missal which the Pope would then uncritically approve.

That both the conciliar and the post-conciliar teaching on the Mass is completely in accord with the Catholic Tradition, and, in particular, with the Council of Trent, ought to constitute the *proof* that Protestant and other observers at or after the Council certainly did not lead the Catholic bishops of the world or the pope astray. Whatever may have happened at the Council itself, or whatever non-Catholic observers, Council *periti*, or even some “progressive” bishops may have wanted—these things are all irrelevant to the final, official acts of the Council enshrined in its documents and ratified by the pope. These are the only things about the Council that really count, and, as we have demonstrated (Question 2), these conciliar acts are both protected by the Holy Spirit from error and became binding upon the faithful as soon as ratified by the pope.

Just as it is *not* the function of the faithful, or even of the theologians, to subject to critical questioning the teachings and rulings of the popes (see Questions 3 and 6), so it is *the function of the official authority in the Church* to provide the official interpretation of the acts of a general council and how they have to be implemented. Some Traditionalists have stated that, owing to the confusion that has followed the Council, the only course now open to Catholics is to examine the Council’s directives and relevant points of doctrinal teaching to discover whether or not they are in accord with the Church’s traditional teaching.

But the idea that it is incumbent upon “Catholics” to do this, rather than the Church herself to decide the meaning and significance of the

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various documents, is a most *untraditional* idea. As we have already thoroughly documented, it is for the official Magisterium of the Church alone to do this.

It is, in fact, a *Protestant* idea that individuals should judge the official acts of the Church. The essence of Protestantism lies primarily in the individual believer’s claim to “private judgment.” Historically, the Protestants exercised this claim principally in the interpretation of sacred Scripture. To assert that the Church’s sacred Tradition is equally subject to the private interpretation of individuals would also involve nothing other than old-fashioned “Protestant” private judgment.

The word “Protestant” originally came from those “protesting” against the decrees of the Diet of Speyer (1529).⁵ Later the word came to apply generally to all those “protesting” against what they regarded as the errors of the Catholic Church. If *we* suddenly find ourselves “protesting” against the official decrees and decisions of the same Catholic Church, perhaps it becomes incumbent upon us to re-examine just how “Catholic” or “traditional” our action really is. We do not, after all, have any ground to stand on in complaining about the unauthorized abuses of the Church’s liturgical prescriptions if we do not ourselves accept these prescriptions.

If the Church, at and following Vatican II, did adopt some new practices which at one time seemed to be more characteristic of Protestant worship—hymn-singing, vernacular liturgy, greater emphasis on the Scriptures, etc.—we should remember that none of these things affects the substance of Catholic doctrine or of the Mass. These aspects of our worship can be changed (Questions 1 and 6) if the Church so decides. In the past the Church adopted and adapted many pagan customs, thereby ennobling them. Moreover, the early Church had such things as hymn-singing, vernacular liturgy, and laid greater emphasis on the Scripture. The fact that the Church has adopted some of these same things again today means that they are compatible with Catholic worship.

Certainly Church authorities had a duty to impose those changes deemed necessary with tact and understanding. Unfortunately, this was not always done. Nevertheless, the substance of the question is not affected by the widespread failure of Church authority to understand how upsetting rapid, widespread, and continuing change could be.

5 See J. Wilhelm, “Protestantism: I. Origin of the Name” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. XII. Also available online at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12495a.htm>.

Moreover, we should remember that Catholic reluctance to accept changes in the Church can itself be a matter of custom and habit. Established custom is always a deterrent to change, but by grace built on faith, it should be easier for Catholics to change whenever there is an authoritative mandate than it is for Protestants to change. If we wish to bring non-Catholics into full communion with the Church, thereby obeying the mandate given to us by Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, we ought to be willing to modify such non-essentials in our worship as might make our Holy Sacrifice more understandable, attractive, and accessible to those who do not enjoy the inestimable privilege of having been born into the Catholic Church.

Indeed, the first Council of Jerusalem was willing to accommodate the worship of the Church to *both* the Jewish and the Gentile converts (cf. Acts 21:17-26). The Second Vatican Council too wished to make the Church more accessible to those outside her fold. If this dream of the Council has hardly yet been realized, we must never forget that this failure partly devolves upon our shoulders. What have we done to share the treasures of the "Catholic faith that comes to us from the apostles" with those outside the Church?

The existence of a false ecumenism among some Catholics, like the existence of false renewal generally, should not cause Catholics to disparage genuine efforts to find the common ground in doctrinal matters with other Christians. Rather, it is the essence of Christian charity to take advantage of whatever opportunities present themselves for open and irenic dialogue with those seeking explanations of Catholic faith and practice.

Blessed Peter Favre, one of the original small band which gathered around Saint Ignatius Loyola and which later became the mighty Society of Jesus, which not only reconverted a good part of Europe, but helped to evangelize several other continents as well, had a philosophy for dealing with those not of the Catholic faith which the Jesuits frequently used to great advantage. We would do well to adopt it today. "In the first place," Blessed Peter wrote to one of the other original Jesuits, Father Diego Laynez, later one of the important *periti* at the Council of Trent,

... it is necessary that anyone who desires to be serviceable to heretics of the present age should hold them in great affection and love them very truly, putting out of his heart all thoughts and feelings that tend to their discredit. The

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next thing he must do is to win their good-will and love by friendly intercourse and converse on matters about which there is no difference between us, taking care to avoid all controversial subjects that lead to bickering and mutual recrimination. The things that unite us ought to be the first ground of our approach, not the things that keep us apart.”⁶

The Church said no more than this at Vatican II. And Pope John Paul II decisively seconded the judgment of the Council when, in his encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*,⁷ he declared that a sincere ecumenical effort is one of the imperatives for the Church in the de-Christianized world of today. “It is. . . certain,” Pope John Paul wrote, “that in the present historical situation of Christianity and the world, the only possibility we see of fulfilling the Church’s universal mission, with regard to ecumenical questions, is that of seeking sincerely, perseveringly, humbly and also courageously the ways of drawing closer and of union.”⁸

It is not that John Paul II didn’t see the problems and difficulties involved or that he was unaware of the ignorance and prejudice that commonly exist where the Church and authentic Catholic doctrine are concerned. It is rather that he saw no alternative. He had been called. We have been called: “I must preach the good news of the Kingdom of God” (Lk. 4:43).

Pope John Paul II went on to say in *Redemptor Hominis*:

There are people who in the face of difficulties or because they consider that the first ecumenical endeavors have brought negative results would have liked to turn back. Some even express the opinion that these efforts are harmful to the cause of the Gospel, are leading to a further rupture in the Church, are causing confusion of ideas in questions of faith and morals and are ending up with a specific indifferentism. It is perhaps a good thing

6 James Brodrick, S. J., *Saint Peter Canisius* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1962), p. 35.

7 See also John Paul II, On Commitment to Ecumenism *Et Unum Sint* (May 25, 1995). Available online at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25051995_ut-unum-sint_en.html.

8 Pope John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, no. 6. Available online at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/.

that the spokesmen for these opinions should express their fears. However, in this respect also, correct limits must be maintained. It is obvious that this new stage in the Church's life demand of us a faith that is practically aware, profound, and responsible. True ecumenical activity means openness, drawing closer, availability for dialogue, and a shared investigation of the truth in the full evangelical and Christian sense; but in no way does it or can it mean giving up or in any way diminishing the treasures of divine truth that the Church has constantly confessed and taught. To all who, for whatever motive, would wish to dissuade the Church from seeking the universal unity of Christians the question must once again be put: Have we the right not to do it? Can we fail to have trust—in spite of all human weakness and all the faults of past centuries—in our Lord's grace as revealed recently through what the Holy Spirit said and we heard during the Council?⁹

Can we doubt the Vicar of Christ? It is unfortunate that some of today's ecumenical efforts have manifested so little of the true spirit of what John Paul II really called for—and what Vatican II really called for. We must be conscious of this continuing problem.

Also, the belief that the Church's genuine efforts at ecumenism since the Council have somehow resulted in a "Protestantized" Mass fails to take into account the fact that no Protestant Church or group has accepted the New Order of the Mass. No conscientious Protestant could really be pleased with the *Novus Ordo Missae* since it reflects traditional Catholic doctrine concerning the Eucharistic Sacrifice as a propitiatory work offered for the living and the dead; concerning the Transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ; concerning the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints; and concerning the necessity for a validly ordained priest to celebrate Mass—all points on which Protestants continue to disagree with the Catholic Church but all of which are all explicitly present in the *Novus Ordo*.

If some Protestants do favor those elements contained in the *Novus Ordo*, it would be those who have benefited from the remarkable biblical,

⁹ Ibid.

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patristic, liturgical, and theological renaissance of the past century, and who now agree that such Catholic doctrines are essential (or at least permissible) elements of Christian faith and practice.

Brother Max Thurian, a Calvinist monk at the Monastery of Taizé in France, whose various comments have been invoked by a number of authors to "prove" that the Mass has now been "Protestantized," replied as follows when directly questioned on the matter: "I have no difficulty in affirming that in the new Order of the Mass, nothing has been changed with respect to traditional Catholic doctrine concerning the Eucharistic Sacrifice."¹⁰

Subsequently, Brother Max wrote the following:

Recently a Protestant liturgical commission was given the task of revising the prayers of the Last Supper. It was proposed that they adopt the second Catholic Eucharistic Prayer (inspired by Saint Hippolytus). That proposition was rejected, because the commission considered that the doctrine implied in that prayer did not correspond to the actual common faith of Protestants. . . .the invocation of the Spirit on the bread and wine presupposed Transubstantiation.¹¹

If a Protestant thinks that the form of our Second Eucharistic Prayer necessarily implies the Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation, perhaps we Catholics can reaffirm our faith in the matter, since we *know* by supernatural faith that the substance of the bread and wine is changed into the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ in this holy sacrament of the Eucharist. The Council of Trent defined this, and Our Lord, in any case, promised that the "bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh" (Jn 6:51). All this still remains true in the New Order of the Mass.

The idea that mere contacts or discussions with Protestants or others could result in compromising the decisions of a general council of the Church in any way is an idea that Pope Pius IX firmly excluded more than a century ago in a similar situation where certain decisions of the First Vatican Council were called into question. Of those who questioned some of the acts of that Council, Pius IX wrote:

10 Quoted in *Note Doctrinale sur le Nouvel Ordo Missae: Capitulaire Doctrinale*, no. 2, *Sup. À Défense du Foyer*, no. 111, note 1 (Fevrier, 1970), p. 44.

11 Quoted in *La Croix* (Paris: June 15, 1977); our translation.

If they believed firmly with other Catholics that the Ecumenical Council is governed by the Holy Spirit, that it is solely by the impulse of this Divine Spirit that the Council defines and proposes what must be believed, it would never have occurred to them that matters which have not been revealed or which could be harmful to the Church could be defined in its sessions and imposed upon their faith; and they would never have imagined that human maneuvers could arrest the power of the Holy Spirit and impede the definition of revealed truths or truths helpful to the Church.¹²

No “human maneuvers” at Vatican II resulted in a “Protestantized” Mass; the Mass is the same as always.

Nevertheless, the regularity with which the charge continues to be repeated that the Roman Missal was revised with the help of Protestants suggests that we should conclude this section by listing the names of the persons—all Catholics, not a single non-Catholic—who did participate in the work of the post-conciliar Commission (or “*Consilium*”) headed by Cardinal Lercaro of Bologna which, under official ecclesiastical authority, was responsible for the actual preparation of the revised Roman Missal. More than 30 diocesan bishops from around the world were represented on this commission. Pope Paul VI actually submitted the text prepared by the Commission to the Fathers of the first Synod of Bishops, and accepted suggestions made by them, before finally promulgating his revised Roman Missal in 1969 (see also Questions 3, 4, and 5, and Appendix I).

The liturgical experts on this Commission, according to one of them, the French priest Pierre Journel, who worked on preparing the revised Roman Missal are listed below. Some are renowned scholars in the liturgy; none of them can be questioned on the grounds of orthodoxy or loyalty to the Catholic Church, as far as the authors have been able to determine. These are the names:

J. Wagner, Director of the Liturgical Institute of Trier;
A. Haenaggi, University of Fribourg, Switzerland (later
replaced by A. Franquesa, a monk from Monserrat, Spain);

¹² Pope Pius IX, *Dolendum Profecto*, in O’Gorman, *The Church*, p. 202.

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Joseph A. Jungmann, S. J., Innsbruck, Austria (his authoritative books on the Mass have been several times quoted in these pages, and he, in turn, quotes a number of the other names in this list in his scholarly pages);

C. Vagaggini, Professor at Sant' Anselmo, Rome;

T. Schnitzler, parish priest from Cologne, Germany;

P. M. Gy and Pierre Journel of the Institute of the Liturgy, Paris, France;

L. Agustoni, a parish priest from Switzerland;

L. Bouyer and L. Gelineau, French religious order priests.¹³



Addendum to Question 7

Brother Max Thurian, who helped found the famous ecumenical monastery at Taizé, was a leading Protestant theologian who was one of the six Protestant scholars invited by Pope Paul VI to attend the Vatican II sessions dealing with proposals for revisions of the *Ordo Missae*. In an interview in the January 1993 issue of *Catholic World Report*, he declared, "As specialists in liturgy, we provided information on our respective practices." Emphasizing that none of the six Protestant observers had entertained any ideas of imposing the liturgy of their own denominations on Catholics, he stated further, "On the contrary, we were there to learn how the Catholic Church was effecting her return to the primitive and rich traditions of the Church, and how she was going to apply it to our time. In fact, if anything, we had been agents of Catholicism within our own confessions." Deciding to follow his heart and his spirit and unite with Christ's Real Presence in the sacrifice of the Mass, Brother Max Thurian became a Catholic and was ordained a priest in Naples in 1987.

Not only did Brother Max Thurian convert. So did another famous Protestant, Roger Schutz, the founder of Taizé, who was assassinated in 2005. The French press subsequently reported that shortly before his assassination, Roger Schutz had formally converted to the Catholic faith.

¹³ Abbé Jacques Dupuy, *Le Missal Traditionnel de Paul VI* (Paris, France: Editions Téqui, 1977), pp. 73-75.

Question 8

Is the New Order of the Mass thus obligatory for Catholics of the Roman Rite? And does this mean I may not attend a Tridentine Mass celebrated by a validly ordained priest?

In previous sections (Questions 2, 3, 5, and 6), we have established that the Second Vatican Council possessed the authority to require disciplinary changes in the celebration of the liturgy and the administration of the sacraments, and that Pope Paul VI possessed the authority to implement them. We have also established that the decisions of the Council and the Pope on these matters are binding upon the Catholic faithful. “Binding” means that the Catholic faithful are obliged to accept them with trusting obedience.

In 1974, the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship in Rome issued a Note on the obligation to use the new Roman Missal which we have already had the occasion to quote (see Questions 4 and 5). This Note, entitled *Conferentiarum Episcopatum*, makes clear that, with the exception of aged priests celebrating Mass without a congregation (and of a special papal indult granted to the English hierarchy) ordinaries are *not* permitted to authorize the celebration of a Tridentine Mass; here is what the Note actually says:

Mass may not be celebrated, whether in Latin or in the vernacular, save according to the rite of the Roman Missal promulgated by the authority of Paul VI on 7 April, 1969.

With regard to the regulations issued by this sacred congregation in favor of priests who, on account of advanced years or infirm health, find it difficult to use the New Order of the Roman Missal or the Mass Lectionary: it is clear that an ordinary may grant permission to use, in whole or in part, the 1962 edition of the Roman Missal, with the changes introduced by the Decrees of 1965 and 1967. But this permission can only be granted for Masses celebrated without a congregation. Ordinaries may not grant it for Masses celebrated with a congregation. Ordinaries, both religious and local, should rather endeavour to secure the acceptance of the Order of the Mass of the new Roman

Missal by priests and laity. They should see to it that priests and laity, by dint of greater effort and with greater reverence, comprehend the treasures of divine wisdom and of liturgical and pastoral teaching which it contains. What has been said does not apply to officially recognized non-Roman Rites, but it does hold against any pretext of even an immemorial custom.¹

The only condition attached to the above directive from the Holy See was that the episcopal conference must have approved its own vernacular version of the new Roman Missal. As far as the United States is concerned, this condition was fulfilled when the National Conference of Catholic Bishops approved the translations of the New Order of the Mass at their meeting in November 1969.² It was decreed at that time that the New Order of the Mass could be used beginning on Palm Sunday, 1970, and that it had to be used from the First Sunday in Advent in 1971. (Note to the Revised Edition: The requirements of this Note from the Congregation for Divine Worship were modified by the document *Quattuor Abhinc Annos* issued by the same Congregation in 1984, and by Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter *Ecclesia Dei* issued in 1988; see Appendices V and VI.)

Confirmation of the episcopal action approving the translations of the New Order by the Holy See was reported in the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy newsletter for February-March 1970.³

Incidentally, the question of the language, Latin or English, was always separate from the New Order of the Mass itself. The U.S. bishops had resolved to request permission to celebrate Mass in the vernacular at a meeting back in November, 1966; the Holy See granted this permission in May 1967.⁴ Thus, "Tridentine Masses"—but in English!—were legally celebrated in this country from October 22, 1967. Pope Paul's revised Roman Missal was at that time still nearly two years in the future, and more than four years would pass before the *Novus Ordo* would become obligatory. But the vernacular had already been generally substituted for the Latin well before that, and this situation came about with the express approval of the Holy See at every step of the way.

1 *Conferentiarum Episcopatum*, in Flannery, *Vatican Council II*, pp. 281-282.

2 Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy Newsletter (October-November, 1969), vol. 5, no. 10-11.

3 *Ibid.*, vol. 6, nos. 2-3.

4 *Ibid.*, (September, 1967), vol. 3, no. 9.

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The question of Latin should therefore *not* be linked with the question of the *Novus Ordo*. Public Latin Masses according to the revised Roman Missal are, in fact, still celebrated in many dioceses. The authors have both been privileged to attend some singularly beautiful and reverent *Novus Ordo* Masses in Latin and devoutly wish that some who have called the new rite “inherently sacrilegious” or such similar things could have been present along with them to see how reverently the New Order of the Mass *can* be celebrated. But the point is: the Tridentine Mass is not the same thing as the Latin Mass.

With the approval of the translation of the new Roman Missal, the U. S. bishops were no longer permitted by the Holy See to allow the celebration of any regular Tridentine masses with a congregation, whether in English or in Latin. That which the bishops are not permitted to allow, the faithful surely are not allowed to attend in order to fulfill their Sunday Mass obligation. The unbroken Tradition of the Catholic Church in such matters is surely that the pastors of the Church establish the discipline and the faithful follow it.

Pope Pius XII perfectly expressed this clearly when he wrote that “clerics and laity may not exempt themselves from this discipline [of the Church]; rather all should be concerned to obey it, so that by the loyal observance of the Church’s discipline the action of the shepherd may be easier and more efficacious, and the union between him and his flock stronger.”⁵ On another occasion the same Pope Pius XII taught that “private individuals . . . even though they be clerics, may not be left to decide for themselves in these holy and venerable matters, involving as they do the religious life of Christian society along with the exercise of the priesthood of Jesus Christ and worship of God.”⁶

His predecessor, the great Pope Pius XI, spoke in a similar vein about the obligation of the faithful to accept the discipline established by the Church:

Whoever desires to fight under Christ’s standard must hold this principle as certain, that in rejecting the yoke

5 Pope Pius XII, “Priesthood and Government,” Allocation to the Cardinals and Bishops (November 2, 1954), in O’Gorman, *The Church*, p. 719.

6 Pope Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*, no. 58, in *The Church*. Also available online at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_20111947_mediator-dei_en.html.

of discipline they will reap not the palm of victory, but ignoble defeat. For it has been divinely ordained that youth cannot progress either in intellectual or moral culture, or in the general formation of life according to Christian principles unless it submits to the direction of another. Now if the other disciplines require a great docility, still more is this the case when the soul is being formed to the work and duty of the apostolate: this duty, since it is attached to the function of the Church received from Christ, cannot be carried out in a holy or useful fashion except in subordination to those whom the Holy Spirit "hath placed, bishops, to rule the Church of God" (Acts 20:28).⁷

In his first speech to the Church and the world on October 17, 1978, Pope John Paul II quoted exactly the same passage from the Acts of the Apostles to make exactly the same point, namely, that one form of the witness of the faithful to the truths is "by obedience to their sacred pastors."

The Tradition of the Church is clear: the faithful must fulfill their Sunday Mass obligation in the manner prescribed by the hierarchical Church. At present the Mass prescribed by the authority of the hierarchical Church is the New Order of the Mass.

But it is said by many attending Tridentine Masses that they cannot in conscience celebrate Mass according to the New Order of the Mass, since they regard it as invalid, sacrilegious, or as having been unlawfully imposed. Now conscience is a serious matter, and the Church has traditionally recognized that consciences must be obeyed. However, the Church has also taught that there is a serious, unavoidable moral obligation to form one's conscience in accordance with the truth.⁸

And for Catholics, the truth means the teaching of the Church. "The Divine Redeemer has consigned His revelation, *of which moral obligation are an essential part*," Pope Pius XII declared, "not to any mere man,

7 Pope Pius XI, Apostolic Letter *Singulare Illud* to the General of the Jesuits (June 13, 1926), in *The Church*, p. 445.

8 John Hardon, S. J., *The Catholic Catechism* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1975), pp. 290-295. See for a concise but very useful discussion of the role of conscience according to the traditional teaching of the Church.

but to His Church, to which He has given the mission of bringing men to embrace this sacred deposit with faith.”⁹

Included among the teachings of the Church—as we have shown in the quotations above from Popes Pius XI, Pius XII, and John Paul II, and also in the answers to Questions 2, 3 and 6—is the firm teaching that the faithful must accept the decisions of competent Church authorities in liturgical and disciplinary matters. The very existence of Church teaching about the necessity of forming one’s conscience in accordance with the Church should immediately alert us whenever we might be tempted to think that the Church might have erred in what she has established or imposed, or might have established “a useless discipline,” in the words of Pope Pius VI,¹⁰ “or one which would be too onerous for Christian liberty to bear.” All this should remind us that, as we have just quoted Pius XII, it is not left to us, private individuals, to decide what is appropriate and fitting in the liturgy and administration of the sacraments. In his encyclical *Mirari Vos*, Pope Gregory XVI said: “It would beyond any doubt be blameworthy and entirely contrary to the respect with which the laws of the Church should be received . . . to find fault with the discipline which she has established.”¹¹

If the Church decides through her competent authorities to officially institute that which we might otherwise be tempted to question, we nevertheless can be entirely at peace in our consciences because we know that the Holy Spirit would not allow the duly constituted authorities of the Church, in officially promulgated acts guaranteed by the Holy See, to lead us astray on anything that might jeopardize our eternal salvation.

This would be true even if a certain discipline proved not to be of the wisest or best for the general welfare of the Church; it would be a responsibility for which the authorities of the Church, not individuals, would have to answer. It would not be a matter of conscience for us. When we go before our Maker and Judge, He will not ask about what the pope or the bishops did, but about what *we* did, and how the Mass is to be celebrated in the Roman Rite was simply not placed in our hands. God will *not* condemn us for obeying the authorities whom He placed over us when they act within their proper sphere.

9 Pope Pius XII, “The Church and Morality,” Radio Message to Italian Families (March 23, 1952), in O’Gorman, *The Church*, p. 681. (Emphasis added).

10 Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 343.

11 Pope Gregory XVI, Encyclical *Mirari Vos* (August 15, 1832), in *The Church*, p. 126.

It is, of course, a truism of moral theology that we may never commit a sin even if the pope or a bishop should command us to do so, but it has not been shown (indeed cannot be shown) that attendance at a *Novus Ordo* Mass is a sin.

On the contrary, we have already shown in the answers to some of the previous questions that the New Order of the Mass is both lawful and lawfully imposed. In subsequent questions we will deal with other specific objections which some have tried to use to show that the New Order of the Mass is invalid, sacrilegious, and the like. Here we can summarize by noting the teaching of Saint Thomas Aquinas on obedience to authority. Saint Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa Theologica* tells us that there are two reasons for which a subject may not be bound to obey his superior: first, on account of the command of a higher power, and secondly, in a matter wherein he is not subject to his superior.¹²

It is clear that in liturgical matters, all of the faithful are subject to the pope and the bishops in communion with him. Even Saint Pius V's *Quo Primum*, for example, makes that manifestly clear. On the other hand, the objection has been raised that we must obey God rather than men, even if the men are the pope and the bishops. However, it is the traditional doctrine of the Catholic Church that the will of God is made known to men here and now through the teachings of reigning popes and the bishops in communion with them. The Church is a living Church, and although her teaching and discipline are grounded firmly in Scripture and Tradition, it is the reigning pope and the bishops in communion with him who interpret Scripture and Tradition as they apply to us today; it is to these living shepherds then that our obedience is owed.

We therefore cannot appeal to any higher authority than that of the pope and the Catholic bishops in the matter of what Mass we are obliged to attend. And there can be no real doubt that attendance at a Mass celebrated according to the current Roman Missal is now obligatory for Catholics of the Roman Rite.¹³ Those who would claim exemption on the grounds of conscience should ponder what Pope Saint Pius X said about the votaries of another school of thought who claimed the right to remove themselves from the direction of the hierarchy of the Church on grounds of "conscience." This is what this canonized Pope said about them:

¹² Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, second pt., pt. 2, quest. 104, article 5.

¹³ Except, of course, where by indult it is permitted by the local bishop.

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What is imputed to them as a fault they regard as a sacred duty. They understand the needs of conscience better than anyone else, since they come into closer touch with them than does the ecclesiastical authority. Nay, they embody them, so to speak, in themselves. Hence, for them to speak and to write publicly is a bounden duty. Let authority rebuke them if it pleases—they have their own conscience on their side and an intimate experience which tells them with certainty that what they deserve is not blame but praise. Then they reflect that, after all, there is no progress without a battle and no battle without its victims; and victims they are willing to be, like the prophets and Christ Himself.

Pope Saint Pius X was writing here about the modernists, and these words come from his famous encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*.¹⁴ We should beware of invoking the same false principle of “conscience” which the modernists found so convenient.



Excursus:

A Further Note on Latin and Vernacular Masses

Because of the persistent confusion of the Latin Mass with the Tridentine Mass (in the press and media the whole problem of “traditionalism” is often reduced to the question of the “Latin Mass”) it seems advisable to add here a further word on this subject. The Latin Mass and the Tridentine Mass are not identical. As was made clear in the reply to Question 8, the Tridentine Mass was actually celebrated in English in the United States for a period before the publication of the revised Roman Missal, while the New Order of the Mass can be and is sometimes celebrated in Latin, which is, of course, the official, normative text of the revised Roman Missal.

In the popular mind these distinctions are lost. What is recalled is that the Mass used to be celebrated in Latin but, since the Council, it has been widely celebrated in the vernacular. This is especially surprising—and even painful—to some when it is recalled that Vatican Council II, in its Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (no. 36)

¹⁴ Pope Saint Pius X, Encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (September 8, 1907), in O’Gorman, *The Church*, p. 377.

decreed that “the use of the Latin language, with due respect to particular law, is to be preserved in the Latin rites.” In the same document, the Council said (no. 54) “that care must be taken to ensure that the faithful may . . . be able to say or sing together in Latin those parts of the Ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them.” How has it happened, many have wondered, that the actual post-conciliar practice virtually everywhere is so different from what the Council decreed?

Basically this happened because in the immediate post-conciliar years hierarchies from all over the world steadily petitioned the Holy See to allow a wider use of the vernacular. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* had allowed a wider use of the vernacular along with Latin. “Since the use of the vernacular, whether in the Mass, the administration of the sacraments, or in other parts of the liturgy, may frequently be of great advantage to the people,” this Council document said (no. 36), “a wider use may be made of it.” The same document also provided (no. 40) that national hierarchies could petition the Holy See for further adaptations of the liturgy to suit conditions in their countries and cultures. That is what national hierarchies did, virtually everywhere. The Holy See, in acceding to their requests, gradually lifted previous restrictions on the use of the vernacular, thus heavily emphasizing Vatican II’s call for a wider use of the vernacular over the Council’s wish for the retention of Latin.¹⁵ It was entirely within the authority of the Holy See to do this, although given the Council’s position, it would certainly also be within the rights of the faithful to petition for a restoration of a greater use of Latin in the Mass.

On June 14, 1971, the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship issued a “Note on the Roman Missal and the Liturgy of the Hours” in which the whole question of the vernacular in the Mass was, finally, simply committed into the hands of the various episcopal conferences. The bishops could decide when vernacular editions of the Roman Missal become obligatory, and they could decide on the use of the vernacular in all parts of the Mass, or on the advisability of continuing some Masses in Latin. According to this “Note,” priests may use Latin or the vernacular, in private or in common. This “Note” represents the instructions from the Holy See under which we currently live; and it means, as a practical matter, that the bishops have the authority to decide whether we may also have Latin Masses and to what extent.

¹⁵ For the background on the change from Latin to vernacular, see Flannery, *Vatican Council II*, pp. 39; 1030.

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In the United States, while the celebration of the Mass in the vernacular is now the established norm in accordance with the permission accorded by the Holy See to the American bishops, there seems to have been no action by the bishops' conference to restrict or ban Latin Masses celebrated according to the new Roman Missal. Provided always that the local ordinary agrees, therefore, lovers of the Latin Mass and of traditional sacred music would seem to be perfectly free to work for a revival of them in this country. In 1974, intending to encourage such a revival, Pope Paul VI himself sent out to all the bishops of the world a booklet entitled *Jubilare Deo*.¹⁶ This consisted of a collection of the simpler Gregorian chants which the faithful should learn "according to the mind of the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy." Promotion of the use of *Jubilare Deo* is long overdue.

The retention both of Latin as a liturgical language, and of Gregorian chant and other sacred music in Latin, would seem to depend heavily upon the initiative of those interested in seeing them retained. It is to be hoped that some constructive initiatives of this kind will be multiplied. James Hitchcock has persuasively argued in an excellent book, *The Recovery of the Sacred*,¹⁷ that we can most profitably work back to greater reverence and a sense of the sacred by carefully building on the liturgy that the Church has adopted, not by expecting a simple return to the old Latin Mass.

16 *Jubilare Deo* was published by the Publications Office of the U.S. Catholic Conference, now the United States Catholic Conference (USCCB). Unfortunately, as of this writing, *Jubilare Deo* is no longer available in the 2005 catalogue issued by USCCB Publishing, which is now located at 3211 Fourth Street, NE, Washington, D.C. 20017-1194.

17 James Hitchcock, *The Recovery of the Sacred* (NY: The Seabury Press, 1974).

Question 9

But how can I have confidence in the *Novus Ordo* Mass in my own parish, considering that the Latin words “*pro vobis et pro multis*” in the formula of consecration are mistranslated as “for you and for all”? The Latin does not say “*pro omnibus*”! Doesn’t this imply a heretical idea, namely, that all men will necessarily be saved?

The actual words of the consecration of the wine into the Precious Blood, in the now familiar English translation, are as follows:

Take this, all of you, and drink from it: this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me.

Is any “heretical idea” being asserted by these words? Did not Christ, in fact, shed His blood for all according to the traditional Catholic faith? There are several scriptural texts that plainly state that Our Lord died for all men, among which, for example, we find:

He . . . did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all (Rom. 8:32).

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive (1 Cor. 15:22).

And He died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for Him who for their sake died and was raised (2 Cor. 15:15).

He is the expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world (1 Jn. 2:2).

And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent His Son as the Savior of the world (1 Jn 4:14).

For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all (1 Tim. 2:5-6).

Moreover, the contrary proposition, that Christ did *not* die or shed His blood for all men—a proposition which Cornelius Jansen held was “semi-

Pelagian”—has been formally *condemned* by the authority of the Church, that is by Pope Innocent X in 1653, in a case involving the Jansenists.¹

Thus, on the face of it, nothing heretical is being asserted by the use of the words “for all” in the consecrating formula; Christ’s blood *was* shed “for all”; that is a simple statement of fact. Nevertheless, as the Council of Trent defined, “even though ‘Christ died for all’ (2 Cor. 5:15), still not all receive the benefit of His death, but only those to whom the merit of His passion is imparted.”²

Catholic theology has thus always distinguished between the “objective redemption” of all by Christ and the “subjective redemption,” whereby the grace merited by Christ on the Cross actually proves fruitful only in the case of those who cooperate with His grace and achieve salvation.

The theologian, Ludwig Ott says in this connection:

The universality of Christ’s vicarious atonement is to be related to the objective redemption only. Christ rendered sufficient atonement for all men without exception. The subjective appropriation of the fruits of redemption is, however, dependent on the fulfillment of certain conditions, on faith (Mk. 16:16), and on the observation of the commandments (Heb. 5:9, 2 Pet. 1:10).³

Most informed Catholics have been aware that the Church teaches that not all men are necessarily saved. And that Christ died not for the faithful only, but for all mankind without exception, is a logical conclusion from the scriptural passages quoted from Saints John and Paul above; Ludwig Ott holds it to be a teaching “proximate to faith” (*sententia fidei proxima*).⁴ It certainly expresses correctly Christ’s intention to offer His Sacrifice on the Cross for the salvation of mankind. Why would it be wrong, therefore, for the Church to incorporate into the words of

1 Neuner and Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, pp. 538-539.

2 Council of Trent, Sixth Session, Decree of Justification (1547), chap. III, in *The Christian Faith*, p. 521.

3 Ott, *Fundamentals*, p. 187. Also see the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 601 on “universal redemption” and no. 1992 on “atonement for the sins of all men.” While no. 1993 states that “justification establishes cooperation between God’s grace and man’s freedom. On man’s part it is expressed by the assent of faith to the Word of God, which invites him to conversion, and in the cooperation of charity with the prompting of the Holy Spirit who precedes and preserves his assent.” (Emphasis in original).

4 *Ibid.*, p. 186.

Question 9: How Can I Have Confidence in the Mass?

consecration of the Mass the revealed truth that Christ *did die* for all (signifying of course, the “objective redemption”)?

The inclusion of the words “for all” in the consecratory formula now more implies the heresy that all *will* necessarily be saved than the previous consecratory formula “for you and for many” (still found in the Latin text of the *Novus Ordo*, incidentally) necessarily implied the opposite heresy that Christ did *not* give Himself for the redemption of all. The consecratory formula of the Mass is not the place where the Church’s full doctrine is, or could possibly be, expressed.

This does not mean that we would not know what the Church teaches for her teaching is clear. The Church’s teaching remains what it is, guaranteed by her infallible Magisterium, regardless of the formula used in the Mass. The Church’s full teaching on this (or any other matter) is not required to be recited in order to effect the transubstantiation of the wine into the Precious Blood. It may be added that the use of “for many” in the words of consecration has never signified and defined belief of the Church that *many* (if that word is interpreted in its ordinary English sense) will be saved. We do not know, and the Church has not said. It is possible (and there have been theologians who have defended this thesis) that in reality *few* will be saved, as, for instance, in the case of Our Lord’s words, “For many are called, but few are chosen” (Mt. 22:14); or, “For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few” (Mt. 7:14).

With respect to the question of the form of the sacrament, the consensus of theologians of past centuries has been that only the words “This is My Body” and “This is My Blood” are absolutely necessary (we will take up this matter in detail in the answer to Question 10). The Church can vary other words in each consecratory formula to express whatever aspect of revealed truth she wishes.

It may be asked, however, why the translators of the Latin *Novus Ordo*, in which the Latin words “*pro vobis et pro multis*” are retained, exactly as in the old Missal, and this by the express stipulation of Pope Paul’s Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum* (see Appendix I), have nevertheless preferred “for you and for all” in the official approved English translation. (The same question may be asked of the translators of the approved vernacular version of the *Novus Ordo* in Italian, since they also seem to have preferred the same translation, “for you and for all”: “*Per voi e per tutti.*” This is the version celebrated by the Pope himself when he says Mass in Italian, as one of the authors has verified

with his own ears from not too many feet away from the high altar in Saint Peter's Vatican Basilica!)

At first sight, the official Latin "*pro multis*" would seem to require "for many." Regarding the motive of the translators for introducing a different translation—into more than one vernacular translation—the authors have no information and decline to speculate. We have already seen that the translation is not heretical. But in addition to the fact that the translation "for all" is not heretical, there is perhaps a further rationale for it.

If we examine the fifth chapter of Saint Paul's Letter to the Romans, for example, we find the following:

For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. (Rom 5:15)

It is necessary, however, to read the first half of this scriptural passage more carefully. Saint Paul says that "many died through one man's trespass." Now, unless, "many" here can actually be translated as "all," this phrase from Saint Paul would actually constitute a formal denial of the Church's dogma, defined *inter alia* by the Council of Trent, that the original sin of Adam and its consequences were in fact transmitted to all rather than just to "many"!

But an inspired letter of Saint Paul would be the last place where we would expect to find denials of the defined Catholic dogma. Indeed the Council of Trent used a passage from the very same fifth chapter of the Letter to the Romans in its definition!⁵

Thus the phrase "for many" *must* be susceptible of more than one interpretation. And, in fact, in the same fifth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, in verses 12-13,⁶ Saint Paul, introducing his discussion of the effects of Adam's sin, employs the phrase "all men" as a *synonym* for the phrase "many," already quoted, which he uses a few verses later on! Thus, if we are to make a capital case out of translating *pro multis* as "for all men" in the English New Order of the Mass, we are going to have to start with the inspired Apostle to the Gentiles himself, who apparently finds it possible to use the two phrases interchangeably.

5 Neuner and Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, p. 130.

6 Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned—sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law.

This same interchangeability of meaning can also be found in the Old Testament. In Isaiah 53:14, for instance, we read that "He bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors." Yet earlier in the same chapter of Isaiah, verse 6, we find the familiar words: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

Orthodox biblical scholars have explained the apparent discrepancy, by pointing out that Hebrew and Aramaic words for "many," familiar to the Apostles, had a common meaning of "the all who are many" or an "undefined multitude." In other words, the Bible on occasion used the words *many* and *all* interchangeably. That is to say, the expression "for many" has a Semitic meaning that is equivalent in some cases to "for all." The original Hebrew or Aramaic words came into the Greek New Testament simply as *polloi*, which in turn was perhaps somewhat simplistically translated into the Latin Vulgate as "*multis*" rather than "*omnibus*." In our day, there has been a greater awareness of the various meanings of all the words involved—and of the Semitic nuances underlying them. The Church has accordingly found no contradiction in doctrine in approving "for all" in English—or "*per tutti*" in Italian—as a valid translation of the Latin "*pro multis*." Some scripture scholars believe "for all" might even be a more faithful translation of the original sense of Holy Scripture.

The great biblical scholar Pierre Benoit, O.P., for example, writes as follows on the meaning of the word "many" in Scripture:

The word which we translate as "many" stresses the sense of a great number and does not exclude anyone. . . . Jesus certainly makes this fullness of salvation his own and it is the whole of mankind to the end of space and time that he includes in this "many" for whom he was going to give his life as a "ransom" (Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45).⁷

Still another biblical study, by Edward J. Kilmartin, S. J., independently finds that "the Semitic phrase 'for many' stands for a totality and not for a multitude in contrast to the whole. Hence it indicates the universality of Christ's redemptive work."⁸

7 Pierre Benoit, O. P., "The Accounts of the Institution and What They Imply," in *The Eucharist in the New Testament: A Symposium* (Baltimore and Dublin: Helicon Press, 1964), p. 80.

8 Edward J. Kilmartin, S. J., "The Sacrificial Meal of the New Covenant," in *Paulist Press Doctrinal Pamphlet series* (1965), p. 4.

It may be of further interest that Saint Thomas Aquinas, who was well versed in the Scriptures and frequently quoted them, remarks: "Saint Augustine explains 'multi' to mean 'all men'; and *this manner of speaking is frequently found in sacred scripture.*"⁹

Finally, a standard pre-Vatican II work, *The Canon of the Mass* by Jerome Gassner, O.S.B., simply finds *either* meaning acceptable in commenting on the consecration:

"'Many' can be taken for (a) all, with a special connotation of the immense multitude of the children of Adam; or (b) with reference to those who actually are saved: many, but not all men, cooperate with the grace of Christ."¹⁰

Thus, we can see that there certainly is justification for the translation of "*pro multis*" as "for all" found in vernacular translations of the Mass; and, from the point of view of Catholic doctrine, the issue simply does not have the importance that has unfortunately been attributed to it.

The doctrine of the Church remains what it is, and always has been, and always will be, regardless of the verbal variations in the formula used for the consecration of the wine at Mass: the sacrifice of Christ *did* redeem "all men," though not all may actually profit because the merits of Christ's sacrifice have to be applied to everybody in particular, and some, employing their free will, may reject God's grace. But this doctrine remains what it is regardless of the variations in the formulas of consecration found in the Church's liturgies, both Eastern and Western. Our Catholic belief in the merits of Christ's sacrifice remains the same whether the formula for consecration of the wine includes "for all," "for many," "for you," or *none* of them!

And there are instances in the history of the Church of valid consecrations where *none* of the above formulas have been included. We will cite some in the reply to Question 10.

As we can see from the history of liturgical development, the Church may add or subtract from the consecration formulas in perfect consciousness that she has left the *substance* of the sacramental rite intact and not altered anything essential Our Lord has laid down, for the liturgy and the sacraments have been committed into her hands by Christ.

⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*, ques. 75, article 2. (Emphasis added).

¹⁰ Jerome Gassner, O. S. B., *The Canon of the Mass* (Saint Louis and London: B. Herder Company, 1949), p. 273.

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For example, the *Novus Ordo* has added the scriptural words “which will be given up for you” to the previous consecratory formula of the Tridentine Mass. Does this added scriptural phrase taken from Saint Luke (22:19) and from Saint Paul (2 Cor. 11:24), bringing out more clearly, by the way, the sacrificial nature of the Mass, alter the orthodoxy of the consecratory formula for the bread? The words “for all,” which also express an important scriptural truth (2 Cor. 5:14; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; 1 Jn. 2:2), no more render heretical the consecration formula for the wine.

Those who have brought such charges should consider those wise words written back in 1963 by a theologian who was setting forth a common Catholic teaching:

Turning now to the “form” [of the Eucharist], the words that signify the meaning of this Sacrament, their diversity makes it plain that *Christ had no intention of establishing a rigid formula*. What is essential is that the words, in different languages, should respect the meaning Christ gave the rite when He instituted it.”¹¹

For those who continue to have anxieties about the problem of translation of “*pro multis*,” as “for all” instead of “for many,” we conclude this section by noting the existence of an official “Declaration on the Meaning of Translations of Sacramental Formulae” which the Holy See issued in 1974 to cover questions of difficulties in translations—questions besides “*pro multis*” and with regard to other languages besides English.

This particular Declaration entitled *Instauratio Liturgica*, dated January 25, 1974, and issued by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith requires that translations of the authoritative Latin texts of sacramental and liturgical documents be as faithful as possible; but then it goes on to specify that, whatever the translation of a formula, its *meaning* remains that of the original Latin text which is approved by the Church. The Declaration is short enough to be reproduced in its entirety below; it should put to rest once and for all anxieties that have been expressed over the translation of “*pro multis*” as “for all” in the New Order of the Mass (and over some of the other renderings in the vernacular version of the Mass):

¹¹ Bernard Piauxt, “What is a Sacrament?” in *Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, vol. 49 (NY: Hawthorne Books, 1963), p. 119. (Emphasis added).

The liturgical reform which has been carried out in accordance with the Constitution of the Second Vatican Council has made certain changes in the essential formulae of the sacramental rites. These new expressions, like the other ones, have had to be translated into modern languages in such a way that the original sense finds expression in the idiom proper to each language. This has given rise to certain difficulties, which have come to light now that the translations have been sent by episcopal conferences to the Holy See for approval. In these circumstances, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith again calls attention to the necessity that the essential formulae of the sacramental rites render faithfully the original sense of the Latin "typical text." With that in mind it declares:

"When a vernacular translation of a sacramental formula is submitted to the Holy See for approval, it examines it carefully. When it is satisfied that it expresses the meaning intended by the Church, it approves and confirms it, stipulating, however, that it must be understood in accordance with the mind of the Church as expressed in the original Latin text."¹²

Note to the Revised Edition: At their annual Fall meeting in November, 1981, the U.S. National Conference of Catholic Bishops was informed that the Holy See had approved dropping "men" from the words of the consecration at the Mass in English. The Latin words for the consecration of the chalice, *qui pro vobis et pro multis*, were henceforth to read: "for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven"—instead of "for you and for all men."¹³

¹² In Flannery, *Vatican Council II*, pp. 271-272.

¹³ See Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, *Newsletter* (December, 1981), p. 45.

Question 10

But quite apart from the translation question, isn't it true that the formula for consecration, fixed for all time by Christ, included "for many"? Wouldn't all consecrations without "for many," or with some different formula, therefore, be invalid?

The principal sources for the idea that the Church's formula for consecration was "fixed for all time," and included "for many," seem to be the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* and Saint Thomas Aquinas. Both of these eminently respectable and authoritative traditional sources held that the form to be used for the consecration of the wine must include not merely the words "This is the chalice of my blood," but the additional words which follow in the unrevised, pre-1969 Roman Missal, so that the complete form which would always have to be used for the consecration of the wine would be (in English): "This is the chalice of my Blood, of the new and eternal Testament, the mystery of faith, which shall be shed for you and for many, unto the remission of sins."

Not only does the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* hold that "we are firmly to believe" that all of these words belong to the form of the sacrament; it goes on to specify that "with reason . . . were the words 'for all' not used."¹

Saint Thomas Aquinas similarly considers the form of the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist in several articles of his *Summa Theologica*, and concludes—not, however, it must be said, with very great conviction—that "it seems incorrect" to hold that the "words 'This is the chalice of my blood' alone belong to the substance of this form but not those words which follow."

"Others say more accurately," the Angelic Doctor notes, "that all of the words which follow are of the substance of the form."²

Now while both Saint Thomas Aquinas and the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* are normally of very great authority, it nevertheless does not seem necessary to follow them in this case. However pre-eminent he may be, Saint Thomas Aquinas is still only a single theologian, not the

1 *Catechism of the Council of Trent for Parish Priests* (issued by order of Pope Pius V), trans. by John A. McHugh, O.P., S.T.M., L.H.D. and Charles J. Callan, O.P., S.T.M., L.H.D. (South Bend, IN: Marian Publications, no date given), p. 227.

2 Quoted from Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, First Complete American Edition in Three Volumes, trans. by Fathers of the English Dominican Province, vol. II, stanza III, ques. 78, article 3 (New York, Boston, Cincinnati, Chicago and San Francisco: Benziger Brothers, Inc., 1947), p. 2475.

official Church, and despite its name, the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* was not itself a conciliar document. And as we shall see, the Church has recognized and recognizes liturgies in which the formula for the consecration of the wine neither included “for many” nor the other words above held by these two authorities (and by some Traditionalists today) to belong to the substance and essence of the formula. Hence, although we would normally assign the greatest weight to these authorities, we may not follow them against the decisions of the Church herself.

Certainly the question does not involve the form of the Sacrament as fixed by Our Lord, because, as we shall note further on about the four New Testament accounts of the institution of the Eucharist, two of them do not include “for many” or the other words above. The *Catechism of the Council of Trent* itself notes that the words “the new and eternal testament” have “been added,” as have the words “the mystery of faith,” just as, indeed, the words “for you and for many” are again not found in that form in the New Testament, but, according to the *Catechism*, have been “joined together by the Catholic Church under the guidance of the Spirit of God.”³

The *Catechism* itself thus recognizes that the Church is responsible for determining what the proper form of a sacrament must be. If the Church recognizes a form different from that believed by the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* to be essential, the authority of the latter can scarcely be adduced against such an official decision of the Church, since, as we have noted, it is not itself a dogmatic source but rather was published as a manual of instruction for priests; it was not issued by the Council of Trent, but was only prepared afterwards at the request of the Council.

As for Saint Thomas, in his reply to an objection that the words, “This is the chalice of my blood,” do effect a perfect consecration of the blood, he does not really speak to the question of whether the words are *necessary* for a consecration; he merely points out that the use of these additional words is *fittingly* made of “the fruits of the passion in the consecration of the blood.”⁴ It could be that Saint Thomas was purposefully vague because he really was not sure; the Church of his day had not decided, and historical variations in the liturgy and the sacraments were perhaps not as well known or appreciated then as they are today. It may be of some interest, though, that the editors of the Latin edition of the *Summa*

3 Pope Pius V, *Catechism of the Council of Trent for Parish Priests*, pp. 226-227.

4 Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (First Complete American Edition in Three Volumes), p. 2473.

Theologica note apropos of the conclusion of Saint Thomas which is neither forceful nor precise that, on the contrary, "it seems to us probable that only the words 'This is the chalice of my blood' or 'This is my blood' are the essential form of [the consecration of] the chalice," contrary to Saint Thomas' own view; thus even his own editors do not consider his arguments as probative here.⁵

Nor would it be amiss here to remark on another of Saint Thomas' opinions, namely, that we should be bound by the decisions of the Church not by the opinions of any theologian, even Saint Thomas himself. He would no doubt have been the first to renounce his own opinion in favor of the judgment of the Vicar of Christ. He said: "We must abide rather by the pope's judgment than by the opinion of any of the theologians, however well-versed he may be in divine Scripture."⁶

In short, neither Saint Thomas Aquinas nor the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* can really be invoked as demonstrating or proving that all of the words used for the consecration of the wine in the Tridentine Mass are necessary for a valid consecration. It seems that they were really justifying the use of the words that were in fact used by the Roman Rite of their day; and making a case—which indeed they do make—of how fitting the additional words are if they are used.

The same thing seems to be true of the Decree for Armenians issued by the Council of Florence in 1439. The Church was at that time endeavoring to achieve union with the Armenian Orthodox (Monophysite) Church, and the Council of Florence therefore set forth a statement of Latin sacramental practice which included the same form for the consecration of the Precious Blood as found in Saint Thomas Aquinas and the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*. However, again, this conciliar Decree appears to be describing and justifying the Latin sacramental practice of the time.

It is of crucial importance to note that standard Church reference works published long before Vatican II and the revision of the Roman Missal have *not* necessarily followed Saint Thomas and the *Catechism* in this matter. The 1961 edition of Donald Attwater's *A Catholic Dictionary*, for example, mentions only the words "This is the chalice of my blood" and adds: "It is disputed among theologians as to how much of the usual

5 S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa Theologica, Tomus Quintus* (Taurini Italia, Ex Officina Libraria Marietti anno 1820 condita, 1937), p. 153.

6 Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Quodlibetum IX*, q. 8, corp., *Questiones Quodlibetales*, ed. R. Spiazzi (Rome, Marietti, 1949), p. 94.

form is necessary.”⁷ There was not, in other words, any definitive judgment of the Church that the form of the consecration had to include any more than those words; rather, it was “disputed among theologians.”

Wilmer’s *Handbook of the Christian Religion* published in 1891 states that the form consists of “the words of Christ . . . ‘this is my blood.’”⁸ F.M. Capello’s *Tractatus Canonico-Moralis de Sacramentis* states that the words “*Hic est enim calis sanguinis mei*” are “certainly essential.”⁹ The four-volume *Moral and Pastoral Theology* by Henry Davis, S.J., one of the commonest parish reference works in the 1940s and 1950s, says the same thing. Father Davis does add, however, that “possibly the rest of the form is essential”; and that “if any of the subsequent words are omitted, a grievous sin is committed” (because the Church’s *discipline* required them).¹⁰ Finally, the highly respected and authoritative Ludwig Ott, in his *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, says that “the words of instruction demonstrate, at least with a high degree of probability, that at the Last Supper Jesus effected the transmutation with the words, ‘This is my body, this is my blood.’”¹¹

The overall opinions on this subject prior to the changes ushered in with Vatican II are thus far from establishing that the words of consecration were absolutely and forever fixed according to the “Tridentine” form. In the post-Vatican II years, Father Joseph Jungmann, summarizing a long history, similarly declares, “the words ‘this is my body,’ ‘this is my blood,’ are the minimum required, and are sufficient for the sacrament to be actualized.”¹²

It is for the Church to decide the proper form of the consecration, and the variance she sanctions shows that her approved forms can vary. We should also remember that “the Church” is not limited to the Roman Rite. Attwater’s *Catholic Dictionary*, already quoted above, states in this connection with regard to the situation before the Council:

7 Donald Attwater (Ed.), *A Catholic Dictionary*, “Consecration at Mass,” 3rd ed. (NY: The Macmillan Company, 1961), p. 117.

8 W. Wilmer, *Handbook of the Christian Religion*, 2nd ed. (1801), p. 336.

9 F.M. Capello, *Tractatus Canonico-Moralis de Sacramentis*, vol. I., no. 288, p. 253.

10 Henry Davis, S. J., *Moral and Pastoral Theology*, in four volumes, vol. III (London: Sheed and Ward, 1935), p. 131.

11 Ott, *Fundamentals*, p. 391.

12 Josef A. Jungmann, S. J., *The Mass: An Historical, Theological and Pastoral Survey*, trans. Julian Fernandez, S. J. and ed. by Mary Ellen Evans (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press), p. 132.

Question 10: The Formula For Consecration—For Many?

The Catholic Church recognizes nine rites, each one of which has its own right and proper way of doing things, from celebrating the Holy Eucharist downwards; they are: the Latin (including variants), Byzantine, Armenian, Chaldean, Coptic, Ethiopic, Malabar, Maronite, and Syrian rites. All these except the Latin and the Maronite are also used by numbers of Christians who are no longer Catholics. It should be noted that all rites are local in origin; historical events have extended their use to whole churches.¹³

A certain flexibility and variation in the words of consecration in the Mass have thus always been present in the Church's liturgies, as a matter of fact, as we can see by examining the consecratory formulas of the Eastern liturgies in the Church. It is interesting to note that in the Byzantine Liturgy, right after the priest says: "Drink of this, all of you, this is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins," the words of Our Lord, "Do this in memory of me" (Lk. 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:23), do not appear—still another variation in the formula for consecration which has been held to be "unchangeable." According to Dom Leclerq there have been no fewer than eighty-nine variations in the formulas for consecration in the history of the Church!¹⁴ And among all these variations there are a number where not only the phrase "for many," but yet other words of the "Tridentine" form of the consecration, are not to be found. None of these consecrations is thereby invalid.

To cite some examples, we may begin with one of the very earliest consecrations of which we have any record; we refer to one described by Saint Paul the Apostle:

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you

¹³ Attwater, *A Catholic Dictionary*, p. 434.

¹⁴ Dom Leclerq, *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie* (Col. 730-750).

eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

We should note that Saint Paul reports that he received the formula of consecration he uses "from the Lord" Himself. And yet this formula does *not* include the phrase "for many." Could we say, therefore, that Saint Paul's Masses were consequently invalid? Paul's disciple, Saint Luke, similarly reports on the institution of the Holy Eucharist by Christ (Lk. 22:14-20), and, again, the use of the phrase "for many" is nowhere to be found. Instead, as with Saint Paul quoted above, only the phrase "for you" is used. Should we therefore argue from this that the merits of Christ's sacrifice could be applied only to those with whom Christ was talking at the moment, namely to the Apostles themselves? No, once again, our *faith* remains the same regardless of the form of consecration used.

It is true that the phrase "for many" does occur in the account of the institution of the Holy Eucharist that we find in both the Gospels of Saints Matthew and Mark (Mt. 26:28; Mk. 14:24); but the fact that Saints Paul and Luke do not include it clearly implies that it was never an *essential* part of the formula for consecration fixed by Our Lord Himself. Moreover, although the accounts in Matthew and Mark do include "for many," they do *not* include the word "chalice" which has equally been held to be part of the "fixed form."

Church history presents other clear examples of Masses where *none* of the phrases "for many," "for you," or "for all" were used. What the standard historical work on the subject calls "the oldest known text of the Roman Mass," the Mass of Saint Hippolytus, which dates from the early part of the third century—and which was, incidentally, in Greek!—has the following text, which includes the form of the consecration:

And when He was delivered up to voluntary suffering that He might abolish death and rend asunder the bonds of the devil and tread upon hell and enlighten the righteous and show forth the resurrection, [He] took bread and giving thanks to Thee, He said: *this is My Body which is broken for you.* And likewise taking the cup, He said, *this is My Blood which is shed for you.* When you do this, make memory of Me. Making memory therefore of His death and resurrection, we offer to Thee this bread and chalice giving thanks unto Thee for finding us worthy to stand before Thee

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and to minister unto Thee. And we beseech Thee to send Thy Holy Spirit upon the oblation of Thy Church, to gather into one [body] all Thy holy ones who partake of it that they may be filled with the Holy Spirit for the strengthening of their faith in truth, that we may praise and glorify Thee through Thy Child Jesus Christ, through Whom glory be to Thee and honour, to the Father and the Son, with the Holy Spirit in Thy holy Church now and forever. Amen.¹⁵

Moreover, the following Oriental Liturgies in use today do not include “for many” in the consecration of the chalice:

Catholic Ethiopian Rite

And likewise also the cup, giving thanks, he blessed it, and hallowed it, and gave it to his disciples, and said unto them, Take, drink, this is my blood (pointing and bowing profoundly), which is shed for you for the remission of sins.¹⁶

Liturgy of the Abyssinian Jacobites

Take, drink this cup: my blood it is, which is shed for you for the remission of sin.¹⁷

Two of the most interesting liturgical finds of recent history have been manuscripts of ancient Egyptian liturgies. The first, the Sacramentary of Serapion, was written about 353-356 A.D. by Serapion, Bishop of Thmuis, a friend of Saint Athanasius and of Saint Anthony, the father of monasticism. This ancient liturgical text has the following words for the consecration of the chalice:

We have offered also the cup, the likeness of the blood, because the Lord Jesus Christ, taking a cup after supper, said to his disciples, “Take ye, drink, this is the new

15 Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, p. 19.

16 Archdale A. King, *Rites of Eastern Christendom* (Rome: Catholic Book Agency, 1947), vol. I, pp. 621-622.

17 E. Brightmann, *Liturgies, Eastern and Western* (Oxford: 1896), vol. I. Also Peter D. Day, *Eastern Christian Liturgies* (1972), p. 141.

covenant, which is my blood, which is being shed for you for remission of sins.”

The second new find, the so-called Deir Balizeh manuscript, belongs to the seventh or eighth century, but its text is said to reach back to the third century. The words of the priest for the consecration of the chalice in this rite are:

Likewise after supper he took the cup, and when he had blessed it and had drunk, he gave it to them saying, Take, drink all of it. This is my blood which is being shed for you unto remission of sins.¹⁸

Scholars studying the Eastern rites can point to many *anaphoras*, or Eucharistic prayers, which do not include the “for many.”¹⁹ “For many” is included in the contemporary liturgy of almost all of the Eastern rites or churches today (except the Ethiopian); *but the fact that it has not always and everywhere been included in rites whose validity the Catholic Church has never questioned or doubted, amply demonstrates that it is not essential for validity.* And whether it is essential has been precisely the question we are concerned with here.

To reinforce the point we may cite further *anaphoras* of the ancient Ethiopian Church where *none* of the phrases “for many,” “for you,” or “for all” is used, indicating that none of these phrases is *essential* for a valid consecration. The following examples are quite old, going back as far as the seventh century, and are included in books published by the Holy See for Ethiopian Catholics:

Anaphora of the Lord Jesus Christ

And as often as ye do this, make memorial of Me. And likewise also the cup, putting wine into it, giving thanks, blessing (three signings of the cross) and sanctifying, Thou gavest unto them. Truly, This is Thy Blood which was shed for our sins.

¹⁸ Casimir Kucharek, *The Byzantine Slavic Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom* (Allendale, NJ: Alleluia Press, 1971), pp. 97-98.

¹⁹ For instance, see Hadji-Burmester, O.H.E., “A Comparative Study of the Forms of Words of Institution and the *Epiclesis* in the Anaphoras of the Ethiopic Church,” *Eastern Churches Quarterly*, vol. XIII (Spring 1959), pp. 13-42, who reproduces more than a dozen such Eucharistic prayers, only two of which include the “for many.”

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Anaphora of the Evangelist John

And, likewise, He gave praise over the cup (three signings of the cross) and said: This (pointing) cup is My Blood of the New Testament (some MSS add: “whoso drinketh of it shall not die, and whoso partaketh of it shall not perish”): Take, drink of it, all of you.²⁰

We may conclude that, just as the use of “for all” in the consecratory formula in the New Order of the Mass as the translation of the Latin “*pro multis*” does not constitute heresy (Question 9), so the use of this phrase in no way invalidates a Mass celebrated according to the New Order.

To determine whether or not any rite of the Mass is valid with respect to the form of consecration—and in whatever language—it really only has to be determined whether the words “This is my body, this is my blood” are present; if they are present, then consecration according to that rite would undoubtedly be valid, as the authority of the Church has determined over the centuries.

The New Order of the Mass contains the essential forms for valid consecration, whether in Latin or in the vernacular. Therefore, arguments contesting its validity on that score should henceforth be laid aside.



Addendum to Question 10

It may be appropriate to point out here that the equivalence of “many” and “all” in the New Testament was noted by the well-known medieval theologian and exegete of the Byzantine Greek Church, Archbishop Theophylact of Ochrida. Writing in his *Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Matthew* (1108 AD), he notes the following regarding Matthew 26:27-28: “Just as the Old Testament had sacrificial slaughter and blood, so too the New Testament has Blood and slaying. He [Christ] said, ‘shed for many,’ meaning ‘shed for all,’ for ‘all’ are also ‘many.’”²¹ In his 1984 volume *The Doctrine of Christ*, Bishop Dimitri of the Orthodox Church of America similarly noted: “The word ‘many’ in the language of the New Testament means ‘all.’”²²

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ *The Explanation by Blessed Theophylact of the Holy Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (House Springs, MO: Chrysostom Press, 1922), p. 229.

²² Bishop Dimitri, *The Doctrine of Christ* (Miami, FL: Diocesan Publications, 1984), p. 96.

As for the question of the “essential form” for the sacrament of the Eucharist, as we observed in the original edition of this book above, quoting the noted theologian, Father Henry Davis, S.J.: Christ did not establish a rigid formula for the “essential form” of the Eucharist, i.e., exact words regarded as absolutely necessary for the priest confecting the Eucharist. In arguing that changes to the words of consecration as found in the 1962 Roman Missal invalidated the consecration when using the new *Ordo Missae* of Paul VI, traditionalist authors have only revealed their ignorance of the Church’s liturgical history.

There have always been legitimate variations in the words of consecration as found in the venerable liturgies of the Church (both Western and Eastern). There are many examples which demonstrate that certain variations in the Institution Narrative do not invalidate the Mass or the Divine Liturgy (as Eastern Christians call it). Liturgical historians have stressed that (1) Christ never fixed the exact matter and form of all the sacraments; (2) the Church has never defined the exact meaning of “matter and form” as treated by the great scholastic theologians; (3) the terms “matter and form” applied by theologians to the Holy Eucharist are not *de fide*, and there have been sharp disputes between Thomists and Scotists, as well as between older and newer Thomists, over what words are essential to the form of consecration; and, finally, (4) the Church has never defined what is meant by the “substance of the sacraments”—which, of course, the Church cannot change. In the last analysis, the validity of any Mass or Divine Liturgy is dependent on the judgment of Church authority, and not on that of any private individual usurping the judgment of the Church on the dogmatic question of what form of words is essential for a valid Eucharist.

The labored arguments used by Traditionalists to dismiss the *Novus Ordo* of Paul VI, in either its Latin or its English versions, as an invalid liturgy (i.e., that no “true Mass” results), on the grounds of variations in the Institution Narrative formulas—these arguments do not take into account the continued discussion by the Church’s theologians as to what exactly effects the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ.

There have been no less than four theological opinions as to what transforms at Mass the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of the Savior: (1) the Narrative words of Institution alone; (2) the *epiclesis*

(the invocation of the Holy Spirit) alone; (3) the *epiclesis* (implicit or explicit) along with the words of Institution; or (4) the entire Canon or Anaphora. Perspective 3 seems now to prevail among Catholic theologians with regard to both the Roman and Eastern Liturgies. With regard to the Roman Mass, after the words of consecration we do have certitude that transubstantiation has taken place. Because of the doctrine of *perichoresis* (the reciprocal presence and co-inherence of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity), there is always the implied presence of the Holy Spirit in everything done by the Son. Thus there would be in the Roman Mass an implicit *epiclesis* in the words of Institution alone. In most of the Eastern Divine Liturgies, the *epiclesis* is explicit.

The statements of traditionalist writers alleging the invalidity of the *Ordo Missae* of Paul VI on grounds of defect in sacramental form are further rendered worthless by a recent decision of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU), the Congregation of Eastern Churches, and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith regarding the validity of the Eucharist celebrated with the *Anaphora* (Canon or Eucharistic Prayer) of Addai and Mari, one of the three *Anaphoras* traditionally used by the Assyrian Church of the East (formerly the Nestorian Church), and traceable to the second or third centuries. This ancient Addai and Mari *Anaphora* is unique in lacking a coherent and explicit Institution Narrative containing the words of Christ as they are uniformly found in both the Roman and Byzantine liturgical traditions. Nevertheless, in a decision approved by Pope John Paul II, the Catholic Church has now determined that “from a theological, liturgical, and historical perspective, the [Addai and Mari] *Anaphora* can be considered valid.” The Roman document in which this decision appears states further:

The words of the Eucharistic Institution are indeed present in the *Anaphora* of Addai and Mari, not in a coherent way “to the letter,” but rather in a dispersed eucharological way, that is, integrated in prayers of thanksgiving, praise, and intercession. All these elements constitute a “quasi-narrative” of the Eucharistic Institution. In the central part of the *Anaphora*, together with the *epiclesis*, explicit references are made to the eucharistic Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. So the words of the Institution are not absent

in the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, but are explicitly mentioned in a dispersed way, from the beginning to the end, in the most important passages of the Anaphora. It is also clear that [there are] passages [which] express the full conviction of commemorating the Lord's paschal mystery, in the strong sense of making it present; that is, the intention to carry out in practice precisely what Christ established by His words and deeds in instituting the Eucharist.

The Catholic Church considers the words of the Institution as a constitutive part of the Anaphora or Eucharistic Prayer . . . without prejudice to the possibility of some variation in their articulation by the Church. Although not having any authority as to the substance of the sacraments, the Church does have the power to determine their concrete shaping, regarding both their sacramental sign (*material*) and their words of administration²³ (*forma*) (cf. CCEO, can. 669).

In summary, the Catholic Church continues to teach that the words of Our Lord at the Last Supper can be expressed in a dispersed way throughout the *Anaphora* or Eucharistic Prayer and still assure a valid consecration of the elements of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. To the key question posed by Traditionalists as to whether the words of Christ, which, of course, vary slightly in the scriptural accounts, have to explicitly appear in an Institution Narrative during the Canon or Anaphora of the Mass (*and exactly as it is given in the 1962 "Tridentine" Roman Missal*), the Church has now once again replied, and the answer remains: No.

23 See the full text of "Admission to the Eucharist in situations of Pastoral Necessity: Provision between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East," in *L'Osservatore Romano* (English Edition, November 14, 2001).

Question 11

Doesn't the removal of the words "*mysterium fidei*" from the words of consecration and their use instead for acclamations, of which three out of four concentrate on Christ's coming again rather than on His presence here and now on the altar—wasn't this rearrangement deliberately intended to downgrade or deny the Catholic belief in the Real Presence?

The words "mystery of faith" are evidently originally taken from Saint Paul, who also says that deacons "must be serious, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for gain; they must hold the mystery of faith with a clear conscience" (1 Tim. 3:8-9).

There may be some connection between the fact that Saint Paul used this phrase about deacons and the fact that some scholars believe that the words were originally inserted into the Mass at this point to be proclaimed by the deacon announcing that the consecration had taken place (the faithful could not see the priest at this point, as is still the case in the Byzantine Greek Church).

The foremost historian of the Mass of the Roman Rite, Father Joseph Jungmann, S.J., is of the opinion, however, that the "explanation that the words were originally spoken by the deacon to reveal to the congregation what had been performed at the altar, which was screened from view by curtains, is poetry, not history. The phrase is found inserted in the earliest texts of the [Latin] sacramentaries, and mentioned even in the seventh century. It is missing only in some later source. . . . How or why this insertion was made, or what external event occasioned it, cannot be readily ascertained."¹

What seems to be certain, however, is that the words are not those of Our Lord at the institution of the Eucharist. None of the scriptural accounts of the institution record these words. They are not to be found in other formulas of consecration recognized as valid by the Church, and hence they are not required for a valid consecration.

Because these words were not spoken by Our Lord, they have been rearranged in the revised Roman Missal containing the New Order of the Mass. "The words 'Mystery of Faith' . . . taken out of context of the words

1 Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, pp. 421-422.

of Our Lord and pronounced by the priest,” Pope Paul VI explained in his 1969 Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum* (see Appendix I), “serve as it were as an introduction to the acclamation of the faithful.”

It should be recalled that the words of consecration involve an *action* as contrasted to a declaiming, and these words of consecration are, of course, substantially the actual words of Jesus Christ. Even though the additional words, “mystery of faith,” can fittingly recall the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist when placed within the words of consecration and have done so for many centuries in the Roman Rite, in another sense they really are more words of a declamatory nature, and thus not so strictly a part of the great action or deed of the consecration. They constitute more of “a being-outside-and-speaking-about” this great sacred action, a sort of declaration of what the consecration has brought about. So it is also appropriate and fitting that these words be said after the words of consecration which actually effect the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ.

After the consecration, the Latin text of the *Novus Ordo* has the priest declare: “*mysterium fidei*,” which signifies, as in the early days of the Church, that the awesome transubstantiation of the elements has taken place. Then follows the acclamation of the people: “*Mortem tuam annuntiamus, Domine, et tuam resurrectionem confitemur, donec venias*” (“We proclaim your death, O Lord, and we confess your resurrection, until you come in glory”). This acclamation (not rendered accurately in the present English vernacular) is an adaptation of the words of Saint Paul used immediately following his formula of the words of consecration: “*Quotiescumque enim manducabitis panem hunc, et calicem bibetis, mortem Domini annuntiabitis, donec veniat*” (“for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until He comes”) (1 Cor. 11:27). If Saint Paul admitted such an acclamation, it is hard to see why it is inappropriate for the faithful today to use the words of the great Apostle to the Gentiles, especially when the acclamation is approved by the Church.

It is, in fact, most appropriate that the People of God should realize that here present is the Crucified and Risen Christ. Here is Christ’s Body as He died, as He rose, and as He is now glorious. Here is “*Jesus heri, hodie, et in saecula*” (“Jesus yesterday, today and forever”)—the whole Christ. Here He is in the “mystery of faith” with His glorified five wounds. Now we see our Redeemer in a veiled way, but soon we shall see Him with our bodily eyes as our Judge and Redeemer: “The Son of Man coming in clouds with

great power and glory” (Mk. 13:24). There is in all this *no* disparagement or denial of the Real Presence; rather there is a new and welcome emphasis on the Second Coming of Jesus Christ who will transform the suffering and persecuted Church Militant into the Church Triumphant!

We should recall that the Pope who authorized the rearrangement of these words “mystery of faith,” in the Mass in no way wished to deny or downgrade the Catholic belief in the Real Presence. In fact, in 1965, the same Pope wrote an encyclical with the express intention of reaffirming the Catholic belief in transubstantiation and the Real Presence; and he entitled it, precisely, *Mysterium Fidei*.

In this encyclical in which the Pontiff vigorously upheld the Catholic beliefs in transubstantiation and the Real Presence—using the language of the Council of Trent—he taught at the outset that “the Catholic Church has always devoutly guarded as a most precious treasure the Mystery of Faith, that is, the ineffable gift of the Eucharist which she received from Christ her Spouse as a pledge of His immense love.”²

Pope Paul VI explained further in the encyclical that he was writing precisely because of errors that had arisen, especially a tendency to downgrade or deny the Catholic belief in transubstantiation and the Real Presence. He wrote:

The awareness of our apostolic duty does not allow us to be silent in the face of these problems. Indeed, we are aware of the fact that among those who deal with this Most Holy Mystery, there are some who . . . spread abroad opinions which disturb the faithful and fill their minds with confusion about matters of faith. It is as if everyone were permitted to consign to oblivion doctrine already defined by the Church, or else to interpret it in such a way as to weaken the genuine meaning of the words or the recognized force of the concepts involved.³

Pope Paul VI also writes that it is *not* allowable to set aside doctrine already defined by the Church. In particular, he stigmatizes in the encyclical *Mysterium Fidei* three modern errors, as follows:

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- 2 Pope Paul VI, Encyclical on the Holy Eucharist *Mysterium Fidei* (September 3, 1965), no. 1. Available online at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/.
- 3 Pope Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*, nos. 9-10.

- 1) “. . . it is not allowable . . . to exaggerate the element of sacramental sign as if the symbolism . . . expresses fully and exhausts completely the mode of Christ’s presence in this sacrament.”
- 2) “Nor is it allowable to discuss the mystery of transubstantiation without mentioning what the Council of Trent stated about the marvelous conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the Body and the whole substance of the wine into the Blood of Christ.”
- 3) “Finally, [it is not allowable] to propose and act upon the opinion according to which, in the Consecrated Hosts which remain after the celebration of the sacrifice of the Mass, Christ Our Lord is no longer present.⁴

Thus wrote Pope Paul VI on the “mystery of faith”! The Pope, who is accused of trying to downgrade or deny the Catholic belief in the Real Presence, proves to be the one who is reaffirming and upholding the dogma before the whole world against those who would deny it. Those who would like to know what Pope Paul VI taught about the Real Presence (and other Catholic dogmas) should consult the great teaching documents of his pontificate, in which all traditional Catholic belief were uniformly upheld, and not look to the rearrangement of words in the revised Roman Missal as “evidence” of his having fallen away.

The Mass, after all, involves primarily the worship of the Divine Majesty. It expresses orthodox Catholic belief (the *Novus Ordo* still does so!), but it is not primarily the vehicle for the Church’s teaching in its fullness. For that we have the sacred Magisterium of the Church. And the sacred Magisterium of the Church continued to uphold all traditional Catholic doctrine during the pontificate of Pope Paul VI and subsequent popes. Indeed, for what is possibly the most complete statement of the Catholic belief in the Real Presence, one could not do better than to consult Paul VI’s encyclical *Mysterium Fidei*.

With respect to the consecration, then, let us be thankful that the Church possesses the tremendous power to bring about this great *mysterium fidei* for the benefit of our sanctification and salvation, and let us be content with the faith of Saint Cyril of Alexandria as to the words

⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 11.

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required to bring it about—the very words which we have already shown to be alone essential in the reply to Question 10. Saint Cyril wrote about these words as follows:

Christ said indicating the bread and wine: “This is my body,” and “This is my Blood,” in order that you might not judge what you see to be a mere figure. The offerings, by the hidden power of God Almighty, are changed into Christ’s Body and Blood, and by receiving these we come to share in the life-giving and sanctifying efficacy of Christ.⁵

⁵ Saint Cyril of Alexandria, “Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Matthew,” in *Mysterium Fidei*, no. 50.

Question 12

But how can the *Novus Ordo* be held to offer a true sacrifice when the *Te Igitur*, the *Memento Domine*, the *Hanc igitur*, and other elements which affirmed the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation have been eliminated?

Before replying to this question, we should add that those who commonly ask it usually go on to say: "It is not enough to reply that the word 'sacrifice' is found in the vernacular translations of the New Order of the Mass, because the word 'sacrifice' can always be understood as Protestants understand it, namely, as a 'sacrifice of thanks and praise,' not as the sacrifice of Christ's own Body and Blood for the living and the dead."

Below are the prayers whose "elimination" the question refers to. The adjoining columns present: (1) a translation of the prayers as they appear in an older Missal for the laity published in 1957, and (2) as they appear in the present approved vernacular version in use in our churches:

Therefore, most merciful Father, we humbly beg and entreat you through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord, to accept these gifts, these offerings, these holy and spotless sacrifices which we offer you first for your holy Catholic Church, that you may grant her peace and protection, unity and direction throughout the world, together with your servant, N., our Holy Father, and N., our Bishop, and all faithful guardians of the Catholic and Apostolic faith. (*Te Igitur*—Maryknoll Missal, 1957)

We come to you, Father, with praise and thanksgiving, through Jesus Christ your Son. Through him we ask you to accept and bless these gifts we offer you in sacrifice. We offer them for your holy Catholic Church, watch over it, Lord, and guide it; grant it peace and unity throughout the world. We offer them for N., our Pope, for N., our Bishop, and for all who hold and teach the Catholic faith that comes to us from the apostles. (*Te Igitur*—vernacular English text approved for use in the United States, 1970)

Remember, O Lord, your servants N. and N., and all here present, whose faith and devotion are known to you. For whom we offer, or who themselves offer, to you this sacrifice of praise, in their own behalf and in behalf of all who are theirs, for the redemption of their souls, for the hope of their salvation and protection from harm, and who now offer their promises to you, the eternal living, and true God. (*Memento, Domine*—Maryknoll Missal, 1957)

We therefore beg you to accept, O Lord, this offering of our worship and that of your whole household. Regulate the days of our lives so that they may be spent in your peace; spare us from eternal damnation and help us to be numbered in the fold of your chosen. Through Christ our Lord. Amen. (*Hanc Igitur*—Maryknoll Missal, 1957)

Remember, Lord, your people, especially those for whom we now pray, N. and N. Remember all of us gathered here before you. You know how firmly we believe in you and dedicate ourselves to you. We offer you this sacrifice of praise for ourselves and those who are dear to us. We pray to you, our living and true God, for our well-being and redemption. (*Memento Domine*—approved English version, 1970)

Father, accept this offering from your whole family. Grant us your peace in this life, save us from final damnation, and count us among those you have chosen. (Through Christ our Lord, Amen). (*Hanc Igitur*—approved English version, 1970)

Though the present English translation of the Latin text of the *Novus Ordo* sometimes leaves something to be desired, it is quite false to say that the prayers of the celebrant have been *eliminated* in the vernacular New Order of Mass. Rather, they *remain* part of the traditional Roman Canon (Eucharistic Prayer I) which still retains a place of pre-eminence among the four chief Eucharistic Prayers approved in the revised Roman Missal.

It is true that the other Eucharistic Prayers lack some of these elements, but, in this connection, we must remember the following:

1. These elements are the result of later insertions into the primitive Eucharistic Prayer (or Canon, or *anaphora*) of

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the Roman Church, and did not exist in their present form before the Fourth Century.¹

2. Such intercessions also generally appear in the Eastern liturgies *after* the Consecration, not before, as in the present Roman Canon. Thus, simply because such passages do not appear in Eucharistic Prayers (or Canons) II, III, and IV, the conclusion cannot be justified (anymore than in the case of the Eastern liturgies in the Church) that the Church has sought to downgrade the offering of the Mass as a sacrifice or downgrade the doctrine of transubstantiation. We have already seen in the reply to Question 11 that the same Pope who promulgated the *Novus Ordo* specifically reaffirmed the Church's doctrine of transubstantiation, as defined by the Council of Trent, in his encyclical *Mysterium Fidei*.
3. Actually, in her new Eucharistic Prayers, as well as in the revised offertory of the New Rite, the Church has taken pains to avoid the misleading impression of a sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ, accomplished during the consecration of the elements. In the offertory of the Tridentine Mass such expressions as "Receive, O Holy Father . . . this immaculate host which I . . . offer Thee," and "We offer unto Thee, O Lord, the Chalice of salvation" caused many erroneous theories to crop up concerning a "natural" sacrifice which many thought preceded the real sacrifice. Many generations of liturgists, as well as many of the faithful, were troubled by this. In the days of Saint Pius V, eminent liturgists had discussed a reform of the Roman Canon to eliminate all misunderstanding of the meaning of sacrifice. Indeed, the offering of bread and wine in the offertory does *not* constitute the sacrifice of Christ. There is no other salvific sacrifice than that of Christ on Calvary, and the sacrifice of Christ is perpetually renewed on the altar *at the moment of consecration* by a

1 John Coventry, S. J., *The Breaking of the Bread: A Short History of The Mass* (London and New York: Sheed and Ward, 1950), pp. 37-43; 115-147. See also Adrian Fortescue, *The Mass: A Study of the Roman Liturgy* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1912), chap. III, especially p. 163.

validly ordained priest, and not before, as the Council of Trent clearly teaches.²

4. The clearest concept of sacrifice is found in the *Novus Ordo* where, theologically, it ought to be: in the *anamnesis*, that is to say, in the prayer which follows the words of consecration and which "makes memory" of the death and resurrection of the Lord by priest and people offering His Body and Blood (made present by transubstantiation) to the Father. Thus, the Second Eucharistic Prayer of the New Order of the Mass (substantially that of Saint Hippolytus going back to the year 215 A.D.)³ declares:

"Memores igitur mortis et resurrectionis ejus, tibi, Domine, panem vitae et calicem offerimus."
(Latin text)

"In memory of his death and resurrection, we offer you, Father, this life-giving bread, this saving cup." (approved English version)

Eucharistic Prayer III declares:

"Offerimus tibi, gratias referentes, hoc sacrificium vivum et sanctum. Respice, quaesumus, in oblationem Ecclesiae tuae et, agnoscens hostiam, cujus voluisti immolatione placari." (Latin Text)

"We offer you in thanksgiving this holy and living sacrifice. Look with favor on your Church's offering, and see the Victim whose death has reconciled us to yourself." (approved English version)

We also find that the Fourth Eucharistic Prayer in the New Order of the Mass makes abundantly clear that the Mass is a sacrifice:

"Offerimus tibi ejus corpus et sanguinem, sacrificium tibi acceptabile, et toti mundo salutare." (Latin text)

"We offer you his body and blood, the acceptable sacrifice which brings salvation to the whole world." (approved English text)

² Council of Trent, Thirteenth Session, Decree on the Most Holy Eucharist, in Neuner and Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, p. 392.

³ Jungmann, *The Mass: An Historical, Theological and Pastoral Survey*, p. 200.

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These expressions (together with yet other expressions that we could readily cite from the text of the Mass referring to reception of the actual Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion) leave no doubt that the *Novus Ordo* manifests a complete Catholic orthodoxy, because it is a sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ who is both Priest and Victim, and who offers Himself as a Victim in propitiation for the living and dead.

The words of the Lutheran scholar Jean Pleyber are worthy of consideration on this subject, because the allegations that the New Order of Mass is no longer "Catholic" is rejected by Protestants who have examined the issue. Jean Pleyber states:

I believe that an essential point of Catholic doctrine is that the Pope is the beneficiary of a particular assistance of the Holy Spirit who has conferred upon him infallibility in matters of faith and morals. There cannot be Catholic archbishops and bishops outside of their total communion with the Pope. On this score, then, the position of Archbishop Lefebvre seems to me indefensible. Without doubt, he says, the question is only "pastoral," that is to say, disciplinary, and not "doctrinal," i.e., dogmatic. But he directly adds that the new canon of the Mass excludes the "sacrificial" character of the Eucharistic celebration, reducing it to a mere "memorial" of the Passion of the Savior and to a bare community meal. This matter clearly no longer involves the pastoral, but dogma. The position of Archbishop Lefebvre seems to me illogical. For if it is a question of dogma, the Pope is infallible and he ought then to be obeyed without hesitation or murmur.

As to the matter in question, I have often assisted at Masses celebrated according to the new canon, and each Sunday I have viewed a televised Mass. I have never seen evidence that such Masses deny the sacrificial character of the Eucharist. And when I hear said and when I read that "they have fabricated a Protestant Mass," I know only too well that this is not true and that such persons are wide of the mark. I have even asked the priest in my village to forward the new liturgical texts to me, and I am

convinced upon reading them that nothing has changed in Catholic Eucharistic doctrine. I believe it is useful to say that the Catholics who speak of a “Protestantized Mass” are quite ignorant of Protestantism and perhaps of a great deal of Catholicism.⁴

We may conclude this particular discussion by saying that there is abundant evidence in the text of the *Novus Ordo* itself—notably in the three additional Canons or Eucharistic Prayers—that the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation is affirmed in the revised form of the Mass and that this Mass remains the true sacrifice of the Cross.

Pope John Paul II confirms all this when he speaks of the Mass—he is talking about the *Novus Ordo*—in his encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, in the following language which no one can argue is anything but “traditional”:

By Christ's will there is in this sacrament a continual renewing of the mystery of the sacrifice of Himself that Christ offered to the Father on the altar of the cross, a sacrifice that the Father accepted, giving, in return for this total self-giving by His Son, who “became obedient unto death” (Phil. 2:8), His own paternal gift, that is to say the grant of new immortal life in the resurrection, since the Father is the first source and the giver of life from the beginning. That new life, which involves the bodily glorification of the crucified Christ, became an efficacious sign granted to humanity, the gift that is the Holy Spirit, through whom the divine life that the Father has in Himself and gives to His Son is communicated to all men who are united with Christ.⁵

4 Jean Pleyber, as quoted in *Ecrits de Paris* (October 1976).

5 John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, no. 20.

Question 13

Regardless of particular words, formulas, or parts in the text of the Mass itself, wasn't the definition of the Mass published in the "General Instruction of the New Roman Missal" proof enough that the *Novus Ordo* is a protestantized version of the Mass?

The "definition of the Mass" referred to in this question, still widely diffused in some traditionalist literature, is as follows: "The Lord's Supper (or the Mass) is the assembly or congregation of the People of God, with a priest presiding, to celebrate the memorial of the Lord."

Before discussing this "definition of the Mass," we should point out that it appeared in the original General Instruction on the Roman Missal (GIRM). Because of criticism leveled at it, however, it was then revised. The following is the revision actually to be found in the definitive General Instruction on the Roman Missal approved and promulgated by Pope Paul VI and currently in effect.¹ The text of this GIRM is easily available in such standard collections as *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, edited by Father Austin Flannery, O.P. There is absolutely nothing "Protestant" about this paragraph from the document:

In the Mass or Lord's Supper the People of God are called together into one place where the priest presides over them and acts in the person of Christ. They assemble to celebrate the Memorial of the Lord, which is the sacrifice of the Eucharist. Hence the promise of Christ: "Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt. 18:20)

¹ What is referred to here is the second edition of the GIRM promulgated on March 27, 1975 and replacing the 1970 version. A revised version in English (the third edition) was approved by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in March 2003 and is currently in effect. The pertinent paragraph in the 2003 GIRM is as follows: "At Mass—that is, the Lord's Supper—the People of God is called together, with a priest presiding and acting in the person of Christ, to celebrate the memorial of the Lord, the Eucharistic Sacrifice. For this reason Christ's promise applies in an outstanding way to such a local gathering of the holy Church: 'Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst' (Mt. 18:20). For in the celebration of Mass, in which the Sacrifice of the Cross is perpetuated, Christ is really present in the very liturgical assembly gathered in his name, in the person of the minister, in his word, and indeed substantially and continuously under the eucharistic species" (chap. II, no. 27).

applies in a special way to this gathering of the local church. For in the celebration of the Mass whereby the sacrifice of the Cross is perpetuated, Christ is really present in the very community which has gathered in his name, in the person of his minister, and also substantially and continuously under the Eucharistic species. (General Instruction on the Roman Missal, Chapter II, no. 7)²

It is misleading to continue to circulate the first version as if it represented an official post-Vatican II Church “definition,” or proved anything at all about the nature of the New Order of the Mass. To those who might reply that the General Instruction was revised only after the incompleteness of the first formulation was pointed out, we could further rejoin that this simply proves that those, if any, whose intention it might have been to see the first, controversial “definition of the Mass” quoted above, published in an official Roman document, were finally not able to succeed in doing so! This should give added confidence in the ultimate judgment of the Holy See in such matters, not create doubts. The Church, on her human side, has never been free of confusion, and throughout her history some have tried to use her for their own ends. A remarkable fact about her history, however, is that she keeps landing on her feet in spite of efforts to trip her. And we should never underestimate her ability to do so. Having noted this, we may add that even the first, incomplete version quoted above was never intended as a *full definition* of the Holy Mass, but only as a *brief description*, quite traditional and orthodox in itself as one description among others. Moreover, it was to be understood in the context of the many other paragraphs (341 in all) of the GIRM. This particular description, moreover, comes in a chapter of the Instruction entitled, “Structure, Component Elements, and Parts of the Mass,” and in a section entitled, “The Structure of the Mass as a Whole.” A description of the “structure” of something surely does not imply or require a strict *definition* of it.

Pope Paul VI, in his Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum*, explained that the GIRM “sets forth the new norms for celebrating the Eucharistic Sacrifice, both with regard to the rites to be performed and

² The relevant texts in the General Instruction on the Roman Missal, chap. II, no. 7, can be found in Flannery, *Vatican Council II*, pp. 154-205. Also available online at www.christusrex.org.

to the proper duties of each one present and participating; and also with regard to the material things and necessary special arrangements for the celebration of divine worship" (see Appendix I).

It was, in other words, not meant to be a full-fledged treatise on the theology of the Eucharist. For such a treatise, as we have noted earlier (Question 11), we would urge those interested to consult Pope Paul's own 1965 encyclical *Mysterium Fidei* in which the full faith of the Church on the central mystery of our faith is admirably set forth.

Even though the General Instruction on the Roman Missal is primarily devoted to the rubrics of the Mass, it nevertheless does contain references to the sacrificial character of the Mass. We are told, for example, that the Eucharist "is the sacrifice of His Body and Blood."³ Also, the entire Last Supper narrative is repeated, and it is re-affirmed that in the Mass "the sacrifice of the Cross is continually made present in the Church whenever the priest, who represents Christ Our Lord, does what Christ Himself did and commanded his disciples to do in memory of Himself."⁴ And, referring to the altar, the GIRM states clearly that on it "the Sacrifice of the Cross is made present under sacramental signs."⁵ Going back to the Foreword of the General Instruction, we find, as we have already noted in the reply to Question 7, that the document quite explicitly recognizes the Council of Trent's definition of the Mass.⁶

We could go on but the point is made; all who are interested should read the General Instruction on the Roman Missal to satisfy themselves that the Mass described in it is truly the sacrifice which the Church has always offered.

But even in the original version quoted above, brief and inadequate a "definition" of the Mass as it was, there was nothing particularly "Protestant." The words "assembly," or "congregation of the People of God," have been objected to by some. But the original Latin is "*sacra synaxis seu congregatio*." The expression "*sacra synaxis*" is a term used in the early Church to refer to the Mass. It has mystical overtones pointing to a sacred body of people brought together—the Mystical Body of Christ. In fact, the word "Mass" only certainly came into use with Saint Ambrose in the late fourth century, coming from the words, "*Ite, Missa est,*" as

3 Ibid., chap. I, no. 2, p. 162.

4 Ibid., chap. II, no. 48, p. 174.

5 Ibid., chap. V, no. 259, p. 190.

6 Ibid., p. 154.

the old *Catholic Encyclopedia*, in an article by Father Adrian Fortescue, made clear many years ago.⁷

The words “congregation” and “convocation” were often used in tradition to refer to the Church.⁸ These words, as well as “memorial of the Lord,” are rich in sacrificial resonances, and are in no way merely “Protestant.”

The words, “with a priest presiding,”—or, as some have translated them, “under the presidency of the priest”—do represent a rather unfortunate translation of what is, however, a very traditional expression, “*sacerdote praeside*.”

“To preside” comes from the word “*praesidere*,” “to preside, to have the care or management of”—this word in the Latin does not have the “democratic” connotation which attaches to “president” in English but simply refers to the power the priest has to officiate at the sacrifice. As Pope Pius XII says, the priest represents Christ “who is head of all his members and offers Himself in their stead . . . [The priest is] superior to the people.”⁹

The word “*praeside*” is therefore rich in theological overtones from the history of the Latin West and does not bear the objectionable “democratic” or Protestantizing flavor that some have chosen to misread into it.

It is, however, important to note that there is a new emphasis in the Church on the perennial doctrine of the participation of the faithful in the priesthood of Christ (cf. 1 Pet. 2:9). The laity does not, of course, possess the power of the ministerial priesthood. But there is a greater awareness today that, because the priest bears the person of Christ and offers in the person of Christ, he acts for the people, and thus, in one sense, *all* offer the oblation together with him. This has always been true in the Catholic Church. The oldest description which we possess of the celebration of a Holy Mass in post-apostolic times, the account of Saint Justin Martyr in his *First Apology*, which dates from around AD 150, includes the following:

After finishing the prayers we greet each other with a kiss.
Then bread and a cup with water and wine mixed are

7 See Fortescue, “Mass, Liturgy of” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, p. 790. Also available online at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09790b.htm>. For a complete discussion of the origin of the name “Mass” to describe the Eucharistic sacrifice, see also Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, pp. 129-133.

8 Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cat.* 18, 23-25: P. 6. 33, 1043-1047.

9 Pope Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*, no. 84

Question 13: A Protestantized Version of the Mass?

brought to the one *presiding* over the brethren. He takes it, gives praise and glory to the Father of all in the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and gives thanks at length for the gifts that we were worthy to receive from him. When he has finished the prayers and thanksgiving, the whole crowd standing by cries out in agreement: Amen. Amen is a Hebrew word and means: So may it be.¹⁰

If bishops and priests were understood as “presiding” over the faithful at Mass in the Catholic Church of the second century, as this passage from Saint Justin Martyr indicates, surely neither the word nor the idea can be ascribed to the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century.

With regard to the supposed approval of a “Protestantized” Mass in the General Instruction on the Roman Missal because of the use of this word, then, we may surely accept the testimony of Saint Justin Martyr to the contrary. In any case, we may surely lay aside any doubts by reading through the General Instruction as definitively promulgated by the Pope and found in our altar missals. There we will find many references to the sacrificial nature of the Mass such as those quoted above.

¹⁰ As quoted in Jungmann, *The Mass: An Historical, Theological and Pastoral Survey*, p. 25. (Emphasis added).

Question 14

Didn't Cardinal Ottaviani, former head of the "Holy Office," intervene to criticize severely the manner in which the *Novus Ordo* downplayed the idea of sacrifice?

In 1969, when a small group of French and Italian theologians wrote a 29-page "Critical Study of the *Novus Ordo Missae*," the late Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani was joined by his colleague Cardinal Antonio Bacci in writing a letter to Pope Paul VI enunciating their opinion that:

The *Novus Ordo Missae*—considering the new elements, susceptible of widely differing evaluations, which appear to be implied or taken for granted—represents, as a whole and in detail, a striking departure from the Catholic theology of the Holy Mass as it was formulated in Session XXII of the Council of Trent . . . Therefore, we most earnestly beseech your Holiness not to deprive us—at a time of such painful divisions and ever-increasing perils for the purity of the Faith and the unity of the Church—of the possibility of continuing to have recourse to the fruitful integrity of that *Missale Romanum* of Saint Pius V, so highly praised by your Holiness and so deeply venerated and loved by the whole Catholic Church.¹

This was the principal point of the so-called "Ottaviani intervention." However, it is also true that a letter dated February 17, 1970, was subsequently published in which the same Cardinal Ottaviani declared to the author of a work dealing with the *Novus Ordo*, as follows:

I have rejoiced profoundly to read the Discourse by the Holy Father on the question of the new *Ordo Missae*, and especially the doctrinal precisions contained in his Discourses at the public Audiences of November 19 and 26 [see texts of both of these Discourses in Appendix II], after which, I believe, no one can any longer be genuinely scandalized.

1 In *Triumph*, special supplement (December 1969).

As for the rest, a prudent and intelligent catechesis must be undertaken to solve some legitimate perplexities which the text is capable of arousing. In this sense I wish your "Doctrinal Note" [on the *Novus Ordo*] and the activity of the *Militia Sanctae Mariae* wide diffusion and success.²

This second letter, although it has been a matter of public record since 1970, has not been publicized to the extent that the original "Ottaviani intervention" was publicized. Many Catholics are unaware of the existence of this second letter, in which the respected Curia Cardinal declared that "no one can any longer be genuinely scandalized." Though a few writers, aware of the second letter, have alleged that the blind Cardinal was the victim of a fraud in obtaining his signature to it,³ Cardinal Ottaviani never in any way repudiated the sentiments expressed in this letter; never did he go on record to disavow it although he could have easily done so.

In fact, later on, Cardinal Ottaviani published still another statement in which he said:

The beauty of the Church is equally resplendent in the variety of the liturgical rites which enrich her divine cult—when they are legitimate and conform to the faith. *Precisely the legitimacy of their origin protects and guards them against the infiltration of errors . . .* The purity and unity of the faith is in this manner also upheld by the supreme Magisterium of the pope through the liturgical laws.⁴

Here Cardinal Ottaviani gives the most powerful and conclusive argument that the New Order of the Mass cannot really contain, or tend toward, heresy, because its doctrine is guaranteed by the divinely assisted Magisterium of the Catholic Church. Those who attempt to justify their rejection of the *Novus Ordo* on the basis of Cardinal Ottaviani's initial opinion of it—delivered before its definitive version was even available—conveniently ignore these other wise words of the same humble servant of

2 Letter from His Eminence Alfredo Cardinal Ottaviani to Dom Gérard Lafond, O.S.B., in *Documentation Catholique* (1970), no. 67, pp. 215-216; 343.

3 A highly respected and reliable Catholic publisher revealed to Catholics United for the Faith that Cardinal Ottaviani expressed to him his distress and anger that these allegations had been circulated by the French publisher Jean Madiran of *Itinéraires*.

4 In *Cruzado Espagnol* (May 25, 1970).

the Holy See—words delivered in October 1963, at the Second Session of the Second Vatican Council. Cardinal Ottaviani said on that occasion:

The words of Christ “feed my sheep” are words which have been addressed only to His Vicar, and it follows that whoever would wish to be counted among the Flock of Christ must submit to the Universal Pastor appointed by Christ. No one can be an exception to this rule, not even Bishops.⁵

Though the promulgation of the new Roman Missal by Pope Paul VI was not a dogmatic definition, the virtually universal acceptance of the new Missal by the bishops of the entire Catholic world is further proof that there is nothing heretical or contrary to Catholic tradition which would prevent its acceptance by Roman Rite Catholics—unless virtually the entire Church is now irremediably in error, something Christ promised would never happen.⁶

Since Cardinal Ottaviani said the Tridentine Mass over a lifetime of outstanding service to the Church, it is easy to understand his *feeling* that the Church should not be “deprived” of the Mass which had become so familiar. Many priests and bishops felt this way. However, this Prince of the Church also accepted and, as quoted above, indeed “rejoiced” in the explanations offered by the Supreme Authority in the Church in response to his earlier doubts and questionings. In this, as in his entire priestly life, Cardinal Ottaviani could well serve as a model for all of us.

The testimonies of other eminent servants of the Church can be added here. For example, the late Cardinal Charles Journet, one of the most erudite Thomistic theologians of his time, and the author of what is perhaps among the greatest works on the Church, delivered these touching remarks about his feelings on the day before he ceased to celebrate the Tridentine Mass which he so loved (November 29, 1969):

The Holy Father has very pointedly asked for obedience when the new *Ordo Missae* begins to be celebrated in the different dioceses [of Switzerland] . . . Tomorrow morning,

5 From Philippe Leroy “*Pierre a Parlé*,” (1976), Chevaliers, no. 32.

6 In the nature of the case, the promulgation of Paul VI's new Missal was a disciplinary act, as was the promulgation of Saint Pius V's Missal in 1570, not an exercise of the Pope's teaching authority.

for the first time, I will say the new *Ordo Missae* with profound obedience, pleased to have something to give to God. It will not be a little thing! For many years I have celebrated the old *Ordo*, which I know almost by heart; each time that I celebrate it, I discover new things. It is as dear to me as my own flesh and blood. I must now leave it. I am pleased to give something to God.

Let me take care to say, there is no renouncing of anything essential—I will return to this point in a moment. One renounces nothing essential pertaining to what is of divine law; the substance of the Mass remains absolutely the same: there is the Offertory, the Consecration. . . . And the Sovereign Pontiff has recalled expressly what was not expressed sufficiently in the rubrics of the new *Ordo*: that the Mass is a *sacrifice*.⁷ He has recalled that there is a change of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. All these things, which are not Protestant, are truly Catholic—and also orthodox. Thus there is the reaffirmation of the classic Catholic doctrine on the Eucharistic sacrifice . . .

Certainly in all this there is our acute sense of uprootedness. Must one accept it or not? Ah, yes! When one tears something dear away from us, and when this is demanded of us in the name of obedience—for a future which is hidden from us—one must say yes, one must be content in saying yes, one must be content even to feel suffering . . . But it is with happiness that one suffers, for he has something to give to God . . . Thus, let us not get into a frenzy. There is no necessity for any uproar concerning the Mass.⁸

In a letter dated January 13, 1975, the distinguished Cardinal also spoke his mind concerning Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre's seminary at Ecône. This letter was addressed to a religious sister who had inquired about his views:

⁷ See the text of the Pope's remarks which Cardinal Journet is referring to in Appendix II.

⁸ "Cardinal Journet and the New Order of the Mass," in *Documentation Catholique* (May 1, 1977), no. 9, pp. 444-445. (Authors' translation).

I have your letter. I have been very moved by what you write me. In the face of one drift towards the modernist heresy, there has been created another drift towards an “*intégriste*” (traditionalist) schism.

It is interesting that Cardinal Journet distinguishes the modernist *heresy* from the traditionalist *schism*. It is surely true that the Traditionalists began by denying no Catholic doctrine; indeed they began by attempting to defend doctrines which they saw endangered. Soon, however, to defend their own position, they had to deny, at least as a practical matter, the *doctrine* that the Pope is the operating head of the Church on earth, in disciplinary matters as well as in his teaching office. The evolution of the traditionalist position fits the pattern that Saint Augustine once described, namely, that a heresy is a schism grown old. One may start with schism, and, in defending it, fall into heresy. Cardinal Journet describes the process in the rest of the letter he sent to the religious sister who had inquired about his views:

There is a new Port-Royal⁹ which is lacerating France, and not only France, but the Church. And it is a much more grave threat than the first, since in order to defend itself from being schismatic, it is obliged to see heresies in the decisions of the Pope and of an Ecumenical Council.

It is necessary to convince your fellow sisters that they are engaged on a path which will separate them more and more from the Church. For the Church of all time (*l'Église de toujours*) is the Church which has a Pope.¹⁰

This last is a point on which Cardinal Journet, Cardinal Ottaviani—and all Catholics—ought to be able to agree: namely, that the Catholic Church “is the Church which has a Pope.”



9 A celebrated Benedictine abbey which profoundly influenced the religious and literary life of France during the seventeenth century. In 1636 the Abbé de St-Cyran became the spiritual director of the monastery, which he soon made a hotbed of Jansenism. The full definition is available online at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12295a.htm>

10 “Cardinal Journet and the New Order of the Mass,” in *Documentation Catholique*, no. 9, p. 445.

Addendum to Question 14

The book, *The Ottaviani Intervention: A Short Critical Study of the New Order of the Mass*, originally written in 1969 and re-issued by Tan Books and Publishers in 1992 in a “fresh translation” and with an Introduction by Father Anthony Cekada, has been widely distributed by various groups of Traditionalists eager to discredit the “New Mass.” As Father Cekada notes, the book’s “central contention . . . is that the New Order of the Mass teems with dangerous errors in doctrine and represents an attack against the Catholic teaching on the Mass.”

The “Ottaviani Intervention” was actually written in large part by Father Guerard des Lauriers, O.P., who, in 1983, was illicitly consecrated a bishop by the erratic Archbishop Peter Martin Ngo-Dinh-Thuc of Hanoi—both men suffering excommunications by the Holy See as a result. It is to be remarked that the original letter to Pope Paul VI by Cardinals Alfredo Ottaviani and Antonio Bacci—as reproduced in the *Ottaviani Intervention*, and expressing their concerns regarding the New Rite of the Mass—was written on September 25, 1969. In his address of November 19, 1969, Pope Paul VI took special care to reassure the faithful who had been disturbed by criticisms that “nothing has been changed of the substance of our traditional Mass.” Pope Paul VI also replied firmly to those who feared that the law of prayer (*lex orandi*) and the law of faith (*lex credendi*) had been compromised, declaring: “It is not so. Absolutely not” (see Appendix II). Then, in March 1970, the first Latin edition of the Roman Missal appeared with a doctrinal exposition on the Mass that was clearly intended to affirm traditional doctrine on the Mass as Sacrifice and Sacrament.

In the Introduction to his book, however, Father Anthony Cekada attempted to show that the statements of Cardinal Ottaviani quoted above that affirm his adherence to the New Rite of the Mass are inauthentic. Motivated by suspicion, he provides no solid evidence that the cardinal’s statements were subject to any kind of fraud or forgery. Certainly, in the years before his death in 1979, Cardinal Ottaviani was so solicitous for doctrinal orthodoxy that he never uttered a single word that would convey any repudiation of the Mass of Paul VI. Nor did Cardinal Bacci. The quality of Father Cekada’s allegations may be judged by his advocacy of so-called *sedevacantism*, i.e., he believes that since Pope John Paul II is a heretic, the See of Peter is *vacant!* There is no longer any pope at the head of the Church!

On August 6, 1979, Pope John Paul II delivered the following words at the solemn funeral Mass of Cardinal Ottaviani:

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He was really a great priest, distinguished for his religious piety, exemplary fidelity in the service of Holy Church and of the Apostolic See, solicitous in his ministry and in the practice of Christian charity. [He possessed] that spirit which is expressed in special attachment to Peter and the faith of Peter, and, again, in keen sensitiveness to what the Church of Peter is and does and must do. . . . Fidelity was the constant characteristic of his whole life. His was really a tried and unflagging fidelity. . . . Always available, always ready to serve the Church, he also saw in reforms the providential sign of the times, so that he was able and wished to collaborate with my predecessors John XXIII and Paul VI, as he had already done with Pius XII, and even earlier with Pius XI. His existence was literally spent for the good of the holy Church of God."¹¹

11 *L'Osservatore Romano* (English Edition, August 13, 1979).

Question 15

If, as the Church has always believed, *lex orandi, lex credendi*, the rule of prayer determines the rule of faith, can we not attribute the drastic decline in Catholic faith and practice to the ill-advised liturgical reforms decided upon by the Second Vatican Council and implemented by the pope?

First of all, we quote Pope Pius XII who, in his encyclical *Mediator Dei* said that the familiar maxim, "*Lex orandi, lex credendi*," was not strictly true in matters of the liturgy.

"This is not what the Church teaches and enjoins." (no. 46)

"The sacred liturgy does not decide and determine independently and of itself what is of Catholic faith." (no. 48)

Indeed Pius XII was quite severe in speaking of "the error and fallacious reasoning of those who have claimed that the sacred liturgy is a kind of proving ground for the truths to be held by faith" (no. 46). The thing that this pope of the 1940s and 1950s stigmatized here would seem to be precisely the same thing being done by those who point not to the teaching documents of Pope Paul VI, such as his 1968 *Credo of the People of God* or his 1965 encyclical *Mysterium Fidei*, for evidence of the faith he professed about the Mass, but rather to his revisions in the Roman Missal which supposedly prove that this Post-Vatican-II pope abandoned Catholic orthodoxy. Actually, as Pope Pius XII pointed out, the liturgy is "subject . . . to the Supreme Teaching Authority of the Church," as expressed in such documents as encyclicals and Pope Paul VI's *Credo*. We must look first to these magisterial documents as far as the faith is concerned, and not exclusively and in a spirit of suspicion at the Mass.

Another point worth making about the phrase *lex orandi, lex credendi* is that its use in recent times was actually popularized by the modernists. Thus the weight now assigned to it by some Traditionalists is somewhat surprising, to say the least. In the 1961 edition of Pius XII's *Mediator Dei* published by the America Press, Father Gerald Ellard commented on the paragraphs 46-48 of the encyclical which we have just quoted above,

identifying the role the modernists have had in distorting the meaning of this maxim. Father Ellard's comments are worth quoting at some length in view of the importance that has been attached to this maxim in a traditionalist context. Father Ellard noted that Pius XII made mention of the phrase primarily "to reaffirm the meaning . . . twisted out of its original significance by modernist heretics," who held that, in any dispute on points of faith, one might appeal to liturgical prayers because these prayers would be found to reflect the correct underlying faith:

In the hands of the modernists this appeal to liturgical practice was by way of asserting "that the sacred liturgy is a kind of proving ground for the truths to be held by faith; meaning by this that the Church is obliged to declare such a doctrine sound when it is found to have produced fruits of piety and sanctity through the sacred rites of liturgy, and to reject it otherwise."

The most conspicuous of the English modernists published a volume under the title, *Lex Orandi*, the whole theme of which is well summarized in one sentence: "Beliefs that have been found by a continuous and invariable *experience* to foster and promote the spiritual life of the soul must so far be in accord with the nature and the laws of that will-world with which it is the aim of religion to bring us into harmony; their practical value results from, and is founded in, their representative value. . ."

But the correct use of the appeal to the Church's prayer-forms, as a theological source, requires that a distinction be kept constantly in mind. The ancient liturgies are not the norm of the primitive faith, as though they had determined and formulated the beliefs. Rather it is the doctrinal belief of the Church that is always prior, and that gives form and expression to that faith expressed in prayer.¹

This is a truth that constantly has to be borne in mind today. Considering the use to which the modernists wished to put an expression such as *lex orandi, lex credendi*, we should be wary of invoking it

1 Pope Pius XII, *Mediator Dei* (America Press, 1961), notes and commentary by Father Gerald Ellard.

uncritically, and, indeed, should not depend upon such phrases or slogans at all, when dealing with Church affairs. Rather, we should look exclusively to the living Magisterium of the Church.

Having made these fundamental points about the maxim *lex orandi, lex credendi*, let us now consider whether the liturgical changes since Vatican II have indeed caused the decline of Catholic faith and practice so evident in the past few years. This explanation may appear plausible to some, but it is convincing only to those who have not reflected upon the inroads a virulent secularism and revived modernism had made in the Church long before the Second Vatican Council. We have only to read the vigorous encyclical *Humani Generis* published by Pope Pius XII in 1950 to see the proportions of the doctrinal crisis already threatening the Church's life and vitality. This document, which highlighted the main deviations of the "new theology" and the "new morality," truly reads as if it were written for our own day when a veritable "epidemic of errors" still remains a principal concern of the Chief Shepherd of the flock.

From the beginning of his pontificate, Pope John Paul II was certainly aware of these problems of the Church, of what he called in his encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* "the various internal weaknesses that affected her in the post-conciliar period."² These same problems have been a steady concern of the pontiffs. In his historic pilgrimage to Fatima, Pope Paul VI delivered a sermon, on May 13, 1967, in which he had occasion to say:

You know Our special intentions which characterize this pilgrimage. Now we recall them, so that they give voice to Our prayer and enlightenment to those who hear them. The first intention is for the Church—the Church, one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic. We want to pray, as We have said, for her internal peace. The ecumenical Council has reawakened many energies in the heart of the Church, has opened wider vistas in the field of her doctrine, has called all her children to a greater awareness, to a more intimate collaboration, to a more fervent apostolate. We desire that these be preserved and extended.

What terrible damage could be provoked in this reawakening, by arbitrary interpretations, not authorized

2 Pope John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, no. 4.

by the teaching of the Church, disrupting the traditional and constitutional structures, replacing the theology of the true and great teachers of the Church with new and peculiar ideologies, interpretations intent upon no longer holding as matters of faith positions which modern thought, often lacking rational judgment, does not understand and does not care for. Such interpretations would change the apostolic concern of redeeming love into acquiescence to the negative forms of secular mentality and a mere human ethic. What a delusion our efforts to arrive at universal unity would suffer, if we failed to offer to our Christian brethren, at this moment divided upon us, and to the rest of humanity which lacks our faith in its clearcut authenticity and in its original beauty, the patrimony of truth and charity—of which the Church is the guardian and the dispenser.

We want to ask of Mary a living Church, a true Church, a united Church, a holy Church.

In innumerable other discourses and documents, Pope Paul VI further attempted to deal with the “ferments of infidelity here and there in the Church unfortunately attempting to undermine her from within.”

But from the issuance of the crushing Syllabus *Lamentabili Sane* of Saint Pius X, July 3, 1907, through the pontificate of Pius XII with his encyclical, *Humani Generis*, August 12, 1950, and into our own days, the modernist errors have persisted and bear witness to the depth of the “crisis of faith” affecting all too many Christians in modern society. What must be emphasized is that this increasingly serious doctrinal crisis developed during the time of the Tridentine Mass. The “Mass of Saint Pius V,” with all its admirable features, which Paul VI and others have often remarked on, was no barrier to the doctrinal deviations that have been the true cause of the decline of Catholic faith and practice in the Church in the twentieth century. The root causes for the present “crisis of faith” and “crisis of authority”—crises which affect both Church and society—lie far deeper than which Mass is being celebrated, and it would be a profound mistake to think otherwise.

Conversely, it can be noted that in countries such as Poland where the *Novus Ordo* and all the legitimate liturgical reforms *have* been correctly

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introduced, and where modernism has made hardly any inroads until very recent times, the faith has been very strong and there are many vocations to the priesthood, belying the assertion of some that the *Novus Ordo* in itself necessarily has the adverse results for the faith. All this was dramatically brought to the attention of the world at the time of the election of the Polish Pope John Paul II, and, subsequently, during his visit to Poland as Pope in June 1979.

A clear distinction must be made between the authorized and correctly implemented liturgical reforms, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the abuses, aberrations, and even sacrileges which have cropped up at the same time, like cockle next to wheat, making the two almost indistinguishable in the eyes of many of the faithful. The resulting confusion has contributed to the further spread of modernism, since so many attempts to "fight" modernism have not been first properly grounded in humble and obedient loyalty to the pope and the Church, and then in acceptance of the official changes.

The false doctrine, which has been and is being disseminated within the Church and which drew such new strength from widespread misinterpretations of the *aggiornamento* of the Second Vatican Council, was identified by Pope Paul in his General Audience of January 19, 1972, when he said: "Modernism was the characteristic expression of these errors, and it still exists today under other names."

A few months later, he stated even more precisely:

It was believed that after the Council there would be a day of sunshine in the history of the Church. There came instead a day of clouds, storm and darkness, of search and uncertainty. By means of some fissure the smoke of Satan has entered the Temple of God.³

Pope John Paul II said the same thing more bluntly in his address to the Latin American bishops in Mexico in early 1979 when he declared: "Some people fall into forms of interpretation at variance with the Church's faith."

The intellectual and spiritual disorientation underlying this modernism is clearly linked to the work of the devil. "An enemy has done this," Our

3 Pope Paul VI, General Audience (June 29, 1972).

Lord noted for all future generations of the faithful in one of His striking parables (Mt.13:28), where He identified the enemy who sowed the bad seeds: "The enemy who sowed them is the devil" (Mt.13:39). The devil in his own way is quite astute. He knows how to take advantage of the spiritual dizziness infecting souls in order to try to ruin the work of the Second Vatican Council. It is assuredly this larger perspective with which concerned Catholics should view the present decline in Catholic faith and practice, whose roots reach back into the philosophical errors of the nineteenth century and earlier. It is highly misleading to blame either the work of an ecumenical council of the Church or the popes for the deviations which have caused such havoc. Neither a pope nor a council can avail if no one will obey them. The lack of obedience, which can be noted on all sides, is thus one of the principal elements in the present crisis.

As we noted, a similar disobedience to the dictates of Pius XII's *Humani Generis* was rife in France and Germany years before the Council and thus perforce even before the introduction of the *Novus Ordo*. The Mass is not the issue; unbelief and disobedience are the issue. The Council became the occasion or the pretext for some in the Church to place the mantle of the Council over their errors, twisting what the Council actually said. There are those who are still trying to do that, but it is also clear that the official acts of the Council, ratified by the Pope, are guaranteed by the Holy Spirit (see Question 2). No heretical affirmations have been or can be found in the Council's constitutions, decrees, and declarations; and those who assert or repeat the contrary can scarcely claim to represent, of all things, the Catholic Tradition.

It needs to be repeated without equivocation: It is *not* the fault of the Council or the popes that clergy and laity afflicted with modernism and its variants, with worldliness, with simple ignorance, or whatever, are not following the plain teaching of that Council and those popes. The distinction we make between the machinations of Council *periti* and the final decrees of the Council (see Question 13) are not merely facile distinctions; there *is* a difference between what a theologian or even a bishop may assert, and what the Church officially enacts. This was so at Vatican I and at all the previous Church councils. Considering the history of these previous councils, Cardinal Newman remarked, "We may well feel indignant at the intrigue, trickery, and imperiousness which is the human side of [their] history." But even in the light of the knowledge of

this human side of the Church, Newman did not hesitate to affirm: “Of course what a general council speaks is the word of God.”⁴

There is no evidence that Vatican II was different from other Church councils in this regard. It had its human side, of course. Yet, what happened at this twentieth-century council was mild and restrained compared to the intrigue and strife and tumult that characterized some of the earlier general councils of the Church. At the Council of Ephesus, for instance, the main protagonists actually brought their own bodyguards: Nestorius, gladiators from the circus; Saint Cyril of Alexandria, sailors from Alexandria. “Disputes were frequent, [and] fights and riots with the Nestorian minority.”⁵ The Council formally ended with groups of bishops deadlocked and mutually excommunicating and anathematizing each other—yet this was the same Council that defined the dogma, which has stood ever since, that Our Lady is *Theotokos*, the Mother of God.

So it was with Vatican II. The Council’s final documents are what count, and they were in no way nullified by the intrigues or “politics” that may have gone on at or after the Council. Supposing that “the Rhine flowed into the Tiber” during the years of the Council, as Father Ralph M. Wiltgen vividly expressed it in the title of his famous book on the history of the Council⁶, the Tiber still remained the Tiber—and remains the Tiber today.

We must not be scandalized at the evidence that the Church has her “human side.” “The divine mission of the Church that works among men and must work through men may be lamentably obscured by human failings,” Pope Pius XI wrote in his encyclical *Mit Brennender Sorge*. They are failings which “again and again sprout up as tares amid the wheat of God’s kingdom.”⁷ Still, the Church is in the world primarily to sanctify and save souls, and this work goes on in the midst of and in spite of the tares which may sprout up. We must not forget, Pius XI insisted, that there always remains in the Church an “immense sum of sincere pursuit of virtue, of the spirit of sacrifice, of brotherly love, or heroic striving after holiness”⁸;

4 As quoted in Ward, *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman*, p. 240. Also available online at <http://www.newmanreader.org/biography/ward/volume2/chapter27.html>.

5 Hughes, *The Church in Crisis*, p. 59.

6 Ralph M. Wiltgen, S.V.D., *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber* (New York: Hawthorne Books, 1967).

7 Pope Pius XI, On the Church and the German Reich *Mit Brennender Sorge* (March 14, 1937), no. 19. Available online at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/.

8 Pope Pius XI, *Mit Brennender Sorge*, no. 19.

we must not, taught this same Pope who condemned Communism as intrinsically evil, "make a career, and in many instances, a low profession, of busying [ourselves] with the human failings in the Church."⁹ Rather we should be grateful to God that He redeems and elevates sinful humanity through that same Church with her "human side."

The Second Vatican Council has clearly been the *occasion* for increased disorders in the Church rather than the *cause*. Pope Paul VI, in season and out of season, interpreted the Council properly for those willing to listen; he also struggled mightily with the immense task of trying to discipline those not always noted for caring to listen. Similarly, Pope John Paul II announced at the outset of his pontificate his intention to insist on "purity of doctrine and sound discipline," and this Successor of Peter continued to feed the sheep and confirm his brethren (see Appendix IV).¹⁰

The actions of the Holy See in late 1979 disciplining Fathers Hans Küng and Edward Schillebeeckx certainly underlined that the Pope meant what he said when he said that his pontificate would emphasize doctrine and discipline.

We may also be sure that none of Pope John Paul II's efforts were easy in view of the obstinate "ferments of infidelity" which existed and still exist today and especially in view of the nature of the communications media. Leaders of the Church in past ages did not have to worry about the mass media hanging on their every act and trumpeting their own superficial impression of it to the four corners of the world, reaching even the Catholic faithful with this "media" interpretation ahead of the leaders of the Church with the real message. Today Church leaders do have to cope with this situation, and they have to be circumspect for the sake of the Church.

It is not a question of cowardice, of "worrying about what the media might think" if strong disciplinary measures were to be imposed. Rather, it is a question of recognizing and taking into account the real power of the media today, a power that can and has harmed the Church. For the media *are* a power, as even presidents of the United States have learned to their grief. One thinks also of the cartoon of Fidel Castro saying, "I got my job through the *New York Times*." And just as the Church once had to reckon with the power of princes and feudal barons, so today she has to reckon

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Pope John Paul II, "Address to Bishops of the Seventh Pastoral Region of the United States" (November 9, 1978).

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with the power of the media. Disciplinary measures have to be taken in the full glare of the lights of hostile media.

Nevertheless Pope Paul VI did not fail to speak out, and more than once; let us be fair to him about that. We cite only one example:

Deviations in the faith or in sacramental practice are certainly very grave, wherever they occur. For a long period of time they have been the object of our full doctrinal and pastoral attention. Certainly one must not forget the positive signs of spiritual renewal or of increased responsibility in a good number of Catholics, or the complexity of the cause of the crisis: the immense change in today's world affects believers at the depth of their being, and renders ever more necessary apostolic concern for those "who are far away."

But it remains true that some priests and members of the faithful mask with the name "conciliar" those personal interpretations and erroneous practices that are injurious, even scandalous, and at times sacrilegious. But these abuses cannot be attributed either to the Council itself or to the reforms that have legitimately issued therefrom, but rather to a lack of authentic fidelity in their regard.¹¹

The witness of such a great champion of orthodoxy as Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani is another testimony against the thesis that all the troubles in the post-conciliar Church were caused neither by this Council, nor by the actions of the Holy See in implementing this Council's decrees. In the issue of *L'Osservatore Romano* of February 16, 1956—six years before the opening of the Second Vatican Council—Cardinal Ottaviani wrote about some of the theologians of the day. He could have been writing today, about the same phenomenon which we have experienced more virulently since the Council, but he was writing of something already occurring long before the Council:

Today certain individuals make a pretense of putting a theology together as one might make up a crossword puzzle. They are composing the "new theology," the "theology of

¹¹ Complete text in Appendix IV.

labor," the "theology of sport," and the rest. The theologies and the teachers "with itching ears" are increasing in number, and the authoritative teaching of the competent organs of the ecclesiastical Magisterium is being ignored. People have never been so indulgent towards error as they are today. And they have never been as severe, as disobedient, and as insolent towards the Church as they are today. Today the ecclesiastical Magisterium has nothing more to say as far as some little men are concerned. These are the supermen of culture, who believe they can act on their own even in the field of theology. Certain intellectuals, who are watered-down Christians and also fanatical in their stand, hardly ever open their mouths except to say something bad about our history, our household, our brethren, and ourselves. But is this not a vile procedure? Is it not primarily a surrender to the enemy? These people seek delight, not as Mary did, at the feet of Jesus, but as Eve did, listening to the serpent.¹²

Should we blame Vatican II for the state of affairs that the respected Cardinal Ottaviani describes? Should we blame Pope John XXIII or Pope Paul VI? The true answer of the authentic Catholic Tradition is that the supreme authorities in the Church ought to be the last to be blamed for errors and abuses committed in the first place *against* their very authority. Rather than carp and blame, even where undeniable abuses exist, we ought to try to reaffirm legitimate Church authority by the generous spirit in which *we*, at least, hasten to obey that authority, regardless of what others may do.

Nearly a century ago, Saint John Bosco surely spoke for the authentic Catholic Tradition when he wrote about the disposition which the faithful ought to cultivate towards the supreme living teacher whom God has placed in the world to help us get to heaven:

Always have the highest esteem and deepest respect for the Roman Pontiff, hating the errors that are spread concerning his quality as head of the Church; speak of him with the highest regard, scolding severely those who abuse him in

12 Cardinal Ottaviani, in *L'Osservatore Romano* (February 16, 1956).

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your presence; refute, as ably as you can, the errors and calumnies that might be hurled against him; always reject writing that attacks his authority and jurisdiction. This you can do by destroying them or refuting them or opposing them by spreading good literature even at the cost of much expense. Pray every day for the Church and for the Roman Pontiff, reciting one Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be . . . with the words *Credo Sanctam Catholicam Ecclesiam* ("I believe the holy Catholic Church"), in order to make an act of faith in the divinity of the Church of which the Pope is the visible head on earth.¹³

¹³ Mario A. Mich, S.D.B., "Don Bosco: Apostle of the Papacy," in *American Ecclesiastical Review* (August 1962), p. 104.

Question 16

Hasn't it been demonstrated that some of the Vatican officials responsible for the New Order of the Mass were, in fact, Masons hoping to subvert the Faith?

No, it has not been so demonstrated. There has certainly been no *proof* given for such allegations, although they have been widely disseminated in pamphlets and brochures attacking the *Novus Ordo*. Mere publication of calumnies does not constitute proof. In the October 10, 1976, issue of *L'Osservatore Romano*, it was officially denied that the high ranking prelates named in various Italian newspapers and magazines (and uncritically repeated by certain British and American publications) had anything to do with the Masons: "Not one prelate of the Vatican ever had anything to do with Freemasonry."¹

Archbishop Annibale Bugnini, in particular, denied that he ever had the slightest connection with Freemasonry or with any other secret organization."² The Vatican Secretary of State, the late Jean Cardinal Villot, also accused of being a Mason, declared forcefully that he had never had the slightest connection with Freemasonry or any other secret organization.

Naturally such denials on the part of the very persons accused did not carry much weight with those who were accusing them; but, the whole question of the alleged Masons (or Communists, or Protestants) in the Vatican raises in acute form the question of the power that the media—in this case, the medium of print—has come to exert over the thinking even of those Catholics who profess to be more concerned about the Church. The power is this: all that needs to be done, apparently, to get some Catholics to immediately doubt the dispositions made by the shepherds of the Church is to publish in some journal or newspaper some accusation casting doubt upon this or that action. Catholics of nearly all tendencies today seem ready, even strangely eager, to believe whatever might be alleged against the pope or the bishops. There has come about what Pope Leo XIII sadly described as "a loosening of that bond of love and submission which ought to bind all the faithful to their pastors, and the faithful and the pastors to

1 For an understanding of the nature and history of Freemasonry, see "Masonry (Freemasonry)" at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09771a.htm>.

2 *Documentation Catholique* (1975), no. 58, p. 42.

the Supreme Pastor, the bond in which is principally to be found security and common salvation.”³

Often it doesn't matter how outlandish the accusation is; the new “authority of print” immediately outweighs the authority which the shepherds of the Church possess from God. Often it doesn't even matter where the slander is printed. Some points in an article in the scarcely pro-Catholic *New York Times* awhile back about an unpopular Church official, for example, were very quickly picked up and repeated thenceforth as absolute gospel truth by various Catholic publications of a conservative or traditionalist bent.

In the case of the stories about the Masons (or Communists, or Protestants) in the Vatican, the original printed sources were scarcely credible, yet they were immediately believed and very widely disseminated by papers calling themselves Catholic. Why are those who profess to be so proud of being Catholic, or orthodox, so often ready to believe, without real proof, the worst about the motives or actions of the shepherds of the Church or the officials of the Holy See? In 1957 Pope Pius XII warned against what he called that “‘free examination’ more fitting to the heterodox mentality than to the pride of the Christian and according to which no one hesitates to summon before the tribunal of his own judgment even those things which have their origin in the Apostolic See.”⁴

Earlier in the same letter already quoted above, Pope Leo XIII has also warned that “if it should happen that those who have no right to do so should attribute authority to themselves, if they presume to become judges and teachers, if inferiors in the government of the universal Church attempt to try or exert an influence different from that of the supreme authority, there follows a reversal of the true order, many minds are thrown into confusion, and souls leave the right path.”⁵

The main result of some of the fantasy and gossip about the Church officials that has reached print has in fact been to deflect some souls from the right path. In addition to the stories of the Masons in the Vatican, there have been even more implausible ones which many Catholics have nevertheless rushed to believe. Thus there were the incredible rumors and

3 Pope Leo XIII, *Letter Epistola Tua* to Cardinal Guibert, Archbishop of Paris (June 17, 1885), in O’Gorman, *The Church*, p. 265.

4 Pope Pius XII, *Allocution to the General Congregation of the Society of Jesus* (September 10, 1957), in *The Church*, p. 759.

5 Pope Leo XII, *Epistola Tua*, in *The Church*, p. 265.

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stories about Pope Paul VI in his last years being the virtual prisoner of Freemason cardinals, or the drugged victim of Communist agents operating in the Vatican, or a heretic who had proceeded with devious cunning to "Protestantize the Mass." In apparitions allegedly stemming from the Mother of God, it was even claimed that the Pope seen by millions of people was an imposter who had been cleverly substituted in the real Pope's place. The imposter could be identified by the size and markings of one of his ears! No absurdity was too foolish for some to believe, apparently.

In evaluating such stories—where real "proof" of any kind is lacking—we should ask ourselves to whose benefit is it that the Catholic faithful should be persuaded to doubt their own Church leaders? "*Cui bono?*" As the old Latin adage has it "to whose advantage?" Could it be that some of these rumors were launched or planted by the Masons, the Communists or other enemies of the Church in order to sow confusion among the faithful? Who, after all, profits most if confidence of Catholics in their divinely-established Church is shaken, in fact beset by many enemies both from within and without? "*Cui bono?*" Catholics should ask themselves this question before simply proceeding to believe whatever scandal or rumor against the Church, her leaders, or her personnel that manages to reach print.

We should remember that the ploy of starting false rumors has always been a well-known tactic of the enemies of the Church. It was a tactic which Saint Peter Canisius, for example, often faced in Reformation times in Germany in the sixteenth century. Rumors were regularly spread about various people, including even the Holy Roman Emperor, as having gone over to the Lutherans, or as having at least dropped their opposition to Lutheranism. Soon the common people—understandably, in some cases—began to believe and say, "*der Glaube ist frei*"—colloquially, "the faith is up for grabs"; henceforth a man may believe what he likes.⁶ Thus can mere rumors without any foundation undermine people's beliefs, including belief in the Church and the integrity of her leaders.

Moreover, we should also remember that to the extent that enemies of the Church might possibly manage to infiltrate the Vatican, they still would not be able to harm the Church by such measures as, say, imposing an "invalid" Mass on her and depriving the faithful of the very sacraments which Christ instituted for their spiritual benefit.

6 Brodrick, *St. Peter Canisius*, p. 70.

The validity of the New Order of the Mass is guaranteed by the supreme teaching and ruling authority of the Church, the Vicar of Christ, who is always safeguarded by the Holy Spirit in feeding the flock of Christ with sound doctrine and sacraments. Catholics need not fear that any plots or maneuverings by Freemasons, or Communists, or any other “enemies” whatsoever in the labyrinthine corridors of the Vatican will prevail against the solemn assurance of the Son of God that His Vicar will always confirm his brethren in the truth and in those liturgical practices conformable to the Gospel of our salvation. It has never happened, no matter what tribulations the Church has had to pass through, and it will not happen “in the one communion which the Apostolic See proclaims, in which the whole truth and perfect security of the Christian religion resides,” as the First Vatican Council expressed it in one of its dogmatic constitutions, adopting language first formulated by Pope Saint Hormisdas in 515 A.D.⁷ Catholics can therefore *believe* it; in fact, they *must* believe it; it is *de fide*. They should rather fear being taken in by the modern demon of the media that would cause them to *doubt* the Church Christ founded upon a Rock.

“It is *safer*,” Newman wrote, “to acquiesce with, than without, an authority; safer with the belief that the Church is the pillar and ground of truth, than with the belief that in so great a matter she is likely to err.”⁸

The “Rock-man” Peter is not at the mercy of conspirators of whatever persuasion. When Peter acts and speaks as the supreme authority in the Church to enjoin upon the faithful a form of worship, it is traditional Catholic doctrine that the faithful should obey and not spend time reading sensationalist exposés of conspiracies casting doubt upon the authority of the Church. Our Lord Jesus Christ asked His disciples for *faith*, and of those He appointed to teach, rule, and sanctify in the Church, He said: “He who hears you, hears Me” (Mt. 10:16). Our faith is not, in other words, in “the authority of print,” which the modern world finds so persuasive. The notion that we should spend our time seeking to find conspiratorial reasons to *doubt* the supreme Shepherd of the Church in the exercise of his legitimate authority in liturgical matters violates reason as well as the basic dictum that our obedience is due the successor of Peter in his authoritative decrees. Our Catholic faith must be that of a little child trusting his spiritual father in the faith.

7 Neuner and Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, p. 225.

8 Newman, *An Essay*, p. 133. (Emphasis added).

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Moreover, we should not make the excuse that we are loyal to the pope, but not to his underlings. The popes have necessarily depended for many centuries on a vast amount of “staff work” performed by others in their onerous and unique task of teaching, ruling, and sanctifying in the Church; entire *palazzi* in Rome house the offices of the Roman Curia. But when the pope confirms with his own authority the work of his own subordinates, it thereby becomes *his* work; this is a basic principle of management whether in industry, in government, in the armed forces—or in the Church. Canon law forbids the transaction of important business or the issuing of documents without the approval of the pope (Canons nos. 243, 244)⁹. We should, therefore, not waste our time trying to identify possible heroes or villains in the pope’s entourage, as, again, the media love to do. In the media the Church is considered just another “political entity”—though *we* know she is the Ark of Salvation.

In connection with all this, there comes to mind a remarkable allocution of Pope Saint Pius X delivered in 1912, in which the saintly Pontiff taught that the faithful ought to learn, literally, to *love* the pope, his acts, and his decrees, including those carried out for him by his subordinates. We might profitably heed these words of Saint Pius X today:

When we love the Pope, we do not dispute whether he commands or requires a thing, or seek to know where the strict obligation of obedience lies, or in what matter we must obey; when we love the Pope we do not say that he has not yet spoken clearly—as if he were required to speak his will in every man’s ear, and to utter it not only by word of mouth but in letters and other public documents as well. Nor do we cast doubt on his orders, alleging the pretext which comes easily to the man who does not want to obey, that it is not the Pope who is commanding, but some one in his entourage. We do not limit the field, in which he can and ought to exercise his authority; we do not oppose to the Pope’s authority that of other persons—no matter how learned—who differ from the Pope. For whatever may be their learning, they

⁹ These canons are from the 1917 Code of Canon Law. See the addendum at the end of this chapter for a reference from the 1983 Code of Canon Law.

are not holy, for where there is holiness there cannot be disagreement with the pope.¹⁰

Thus, Pope Saint Pius X, the foe of modernism, on the spirit in which Catholics ought to receive and accept the decisions and dispositions of the Vicar of Christ on earth.



Addendum to Question 16

Though the provisions of Canons 243 and 244 of the 1917 Code of Canon Law, mentioned above, no longer appear in the 1983 Code of Canon Law, Canon 1391 in the new Code provides just penalties for anyone who “fabricates a false public ecclesiastical document, or changes, destroys, or conceals an authentic document, or uses a false or changed document; or one who uses another false or changed document in an ecclesiastical matter; or one who states a falsehood in a public ecclesiastical document.” The statutes for each Vatican Congregation and Pontifical Council detail the process for the issuance of their documents with the approval of the Roman Pontiff.

¹⁰ Pope Saint Pius X, “Love for the Pope,” Allocution to the Members of the Apostolic Union (November 18, 1912), in O’Gorman, *The Church*, pp. 395-396.

Question 17

Quite apart from the motives of those who produced the *Novus Ordo*, or of the particular elements, words, or phrases in the New Rite, hasn't it caused an unprecedented desacralization of the church? Shouldn't we judge it as a mistake by its already evident "fruits"?

The word "desacralization" is practically a description of our present age: having ceased to believe in God, our age no longer believes in, or even understands, the sacred. The prevailing philosophy of the age is aptly called secular humanism, "secular" being opposed to "sacred," and "human" to "divine."

One knowledgeable observer even speaks of "a frenzied determination to desacralize, to fight against whatever is 'sacred,' against every '*sacrum*' at every level of human life, particularly in social and public life. The firm intention is to force man to live totally apart from any '*sacrum*' whatsoever, so as to make him 'man' and nothing more—that is to say 'desacralized.'" The identity of this particular observer is of special interest: He was Karol Wojtyla, Cardinal Archbishop of Cracow, soon to be elected Pope John Paul II.¹ And he testifies here to what should be in any case obvious, that we live in a radically desacralized era. The Church is swimming against the tide in attempting to maintain any sense of the sacred at all among the people of today.

Some or even much of what we encounter in Catholic worship today which strikes us as irreverent or desacralized, therefore, is scarcely to be ascribed to the New Order of the Mass. It is rather a reflection of what some people today think is appropriate for worship or the liturgy—and, of course, most people today have been radically secularized by the desacralized world around them, often without realizing it.

Thus, we now have many abuses in the liturgy, which can be conveniently subsumed under the phrase "do your own thing;" and thus, too, we have such in-between things as "rock Masses" and an all too common casual, breezy irreverence which, while not actually abuses of concrete, existing regulations of the Holy See, certainly do not lend themselves very easily to anything that we could properly call "sacred."

1 Karol Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II), *Sign of Contradiction* (NY: The Seabury Press, 1979), p. 155.

Then there is the fact of change itself in today's "future shock" society; change steadily undermines the liturgy, which of its nature makes use of fixed, repeated hieratic words and actions. The Mass is the *re-enactment* of the sacrifice of Christ. It is, necessarily, carried out over and over again in the same way. To change this habitual action without good reason is to risk undermining belief in it; it is to risk reinforcing the impression that what *appears* to be different is different. What Saint Thomas Aquinas says about changing laws applies also to changing the liturgy: "To a certain extent, the mere change of law is of itself prejudicial to the common good because custom avails much for the observance of laws, seeing that what is done contrary to general custom, even in slight matters, is looked upon as grave."² In other words, custom equally "avails much" for the proper celebration of the Mass—and, especially, for repeatedly reinforcing the belief of the faithful in its efficacy. Newman aptly notes on this subject:

To the devotional mind what is new and strange is as repulsive, often as dangerous, as falsehood is to the scientific. Novelty is often error to those who are unprepared for it, from the refraction with which it enters into their conceptions . . .

The history of the Latin versions of the Scriptures furnishes a familiar illustration of [the] conflict between popular and educated faith. The Gallican version of the Psalter, Saint Jerome's earlier work, got such possession of the West, that to this day we use it instead of his later and more correct version from the Hebrew. Devotional use prevailed over scholastic accuracy in a matter of secondary concern. "Jerome," says Dr. Westcott, "was accused of disturbing the repose of the Church, and shaking the foundations of faith."³

To regard change as something good in itself as far as liturgy is concerned, therefore, is to misunderstand the nature both of liturgy and of the sacred.

This is not to say that change is never necessary. Saint Thomas Aquinas, again, teaches that "on the part of man whose acts are regulated by law,

2 Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, first pt., pt. 2, ques. 97, article 2.

3 Newman, *Via Media*, Preface, p. lii.

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the law can rightly be changed on account of the *changed condition of man*, to whom different things are expedient according to the difference of his condition.”⁴ It was the changed condition of man in the modern world which Pope John XXIII adduced in his “Opening Speech to the Council” as the principal reason for convoking Vatican II (see Question 1); and the Council recommended changes intended to respond to the changed condition of man in the modern world.

So it is not true to say that changes, even in the Church’s manner of celebrating Mass, are never necessary. The Mass has very often been changed in its externals. A classic like Father Joseph Jungmann’s *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, or even the same author’s shorter, more readable *The Mass*, demonstrates exhaustively the fact of these changes down through the centuries. It is correct to say, however, that when change is required, it should be carefully prepared for, explained, and carried out with a minimum of disruption—and with an understanding that people can be deeply affected when cherished habits of any kind, but especially habits of worship, are upset.

Certainly, too few people have understood this as far as the Vatican II changes are concerned. The occasion of the liturgical changes officially instituted by the Church during and following the Council provided all too many people the opportunity to demonstrate to all and sundry just how little they did understand about liturgy and the sacred all along. Included among such people are not only priests who celebrate in an irreverent or offhand manner, of course, but all the members of the congregations who go along with and favor the new matter-of-fact secularized liturgical atmosphere and the sometimes curious innovations that we have witnessed over the past few decades.

Of course we must not exaggerate, either. Correctly and reverently celebrated, the New Order of the Mass has been a truly sacred experience for millions of Catholics in many countries; the New Order does constitute a fitting mode of worship of the divine majesty, and this is true even when it is celebrated in the vernacular. Also, many Catholics in countless parishes have been spared some of the more common abuses. The New Order of the Mass in itself is in no way desacralized, as we have shown in some previous sections (e.g., Question 12), though it did suffer the misfortune of being born in a desacralized age. Fair-minded Catholics

4 Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, first pt., pt. 2, ques. 97. (Emphasis added).

must admit this even though both the existence of desacralization today and its seriousness must also be admitted by those truly concerned about the future and welfare of the Church.

To some, "desacralization" that appeared once any changes were introduced into the old way of celebrating Mass has *meant* "Vatican II." No matter that most of what the Council decreed or intended can be readily justified and indeed sounds very good on paper—however, hardly anybody has *read* the Council's documents to find out how it all reads on paper. The actual experience of the changeover to the New Order of the Mass thus prompted too many Catholics to begin asking the kinds of questions with which we have been obliged to deal at length in these pages.

At a time when the saying, "nothing is sacred any longer," had practically become a proverb, it suddenly seemed to many that the Church too was no longer "sacred." This, of course, is not true. The Church, "with her marvelous propagation, eminent holiness and inexhaustible fruitfulness in everything that is good," remains, as the First Vatican Council taught, "a great and perpetual motive or credibility and an irrefutable testimony of her divine mission."⁵

As we have tried to demonstrate, all the anguished questions that have arisen about the Pope, the Council, and the Mass can be answered to the satisfaction of most Catholics. But wouldn't it have been preferable for all if these questions about the changes in Catholic worship and practice desired by the Council had never arisen?

In other words, wouldn't it have been preferable if the Council and the Holy See had been more carefully followed in the implementation of all the changes? Not all of the changes would necessarily have been *liked* any better by some, but at least some of the other radical questions about the licitness, validity, etc., of the *Novus Ordo* might not have arisen; and the exodus into some "little churches" might have been avoided.

A careful reading of the excellent collection of official conciliar and post-conciliar Church liturgical documents, such as the ones contained in Austin Flannery's *Vatican II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents*, will readily satisfy most unprejudiced observers that the Council's ideas about the liturgy are not really so startling or untraditional; many of them constitute a return to *earlier* Church traditions. Also, many other changes, such as a greater orientation towards the Scriptures and greater

5 Neuner and Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, p. 46.

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participation by the congregation, were recommended by Popes Pius X and Pius XII (see Question 6). These were long overdue even then, and are surely now necessary for the renewed task of evangelization which is today especially the task of all Catholics. At the very least, the liturgical reforms envisaged by Vatican II ought to be studied in the Council's documents before they are condemned.

Still the fact remains that, in practice, too many of the Council's reforms have been implemented by people with secularized mentalities in a radically secularized atmosphere. What we have is not so much "Vatican II," as it is a reflection of the more or less desacralized mentality of today. It is unfortunate that neither the bishops nor, sometimes, even the Roman Congregations themselves, have seemed to notice the effect this kind of liturgy has had, and is still having, on too many Catholics.

Nevertheless, for the record, it is necessary to state that both the popes and the Roman Congregations, where they perceived that all was not well, more than once attempted to get the Council's liturgical reform back on the track in the post-conciliar years. No one can hold that Church authorities were simply oblivious to liturgical aberrations. As early as 1967, Pope Paul VI was saying:

Cause of concern and sorrow are the disciplinary irregularities in communal worship that have occurred in various places. They frequently are shaped to suit individual whims and often take forms that are wholly at odds with the precepts now in force in the Church. This greatly upsets many upright Church members. Moreover, these innovations are often interlaced with issues that endanger the peace and good order of the Church, issues that must be rejected. They are also harmful because they set an example that sows confusion in people's minds. In this connection, We would remind you of what the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy has to say about the regulation of the liturgy: "Regulation of the sacred liturgy depends solely on the authority of the Church" (no. 22).

We are even more anxious, however, to express Our hope that bishops will keep a close watch on such episodes, that they will maintain balance and harmony in the Church's liturgical worship and its religious life. Right now, in this

post-conciliar period, these areas are objects of special concern and the most tender care.

We would make the same plea to religious orders, for at present the Church expects them to aid this cause in a special way by their fidelity and example. We also urge the clergy and all the faithful not to give in to unbridled and free-wheeling experimentation, but rather to perfect and execute the rites prescribed by the Church. . . .

An even greater source of sorrow is the inclination of some to deprive the liturgy of its sacred character—to “desacralize” it (if we can even call it liturgy anymore). This necessarily leads to the desacralization of the Christian religion as well. This new outlook whose sordid roots are easy to discern, would destroy authentic Catholic worship. It leads to doctrinal, disciplinary and pastoral subversions of such magnitude that We do not hesitate to consider it deviant. We say this with sadness, not only because it evinces a spirit that runs counter to canon law and that is too caught up with novelty for its own sake, but also, because it necessarily involves the disintegration of religion. . . .

This danger must be repulsed. Individuals, periodicals and institutions which may be under its spell must be won over again to the cause of the Church and its support. The norms and teachings of the Council must be defended.⁶

In 1970, a Roman Congregation, in a similar vein, issued a notice which specifically attempted to deal with the phenomenon of “desacralization”:

Liturgical reform is not synonymous with so-called *desacralization* and should not be the occasion for what is called the *secularization of the world*. Thus the liturgical rites must retain a dignified and sacred character.

The effectiveness of liturgical actions does not consist in the continual search for newer rites or simpler forms, but in an ever deeper insight into the word of God and the

⁶ Pope Paul VI, “Obstacles to Liturgical Renewal,” to the Commission for Implementing the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (April 19, 1967), in *The Pope Speaks*, vol. 12, no. 2.

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Mystery which is celebrated. The presence of God will be ensured by following the rites of the Church rather than those inspired by a priest's individual preference.⁷

We could quote many other examples of the attempts of the popes and of the Holy See to deal with the problem of desacralization that has disfigured the reform desired by the Council, but it must be conceded that attempts to deal with problems on the basis of authority alone are seldom successful, if none or few of those subject to authority are disposed to follow it. If it is to function properly, authority requires acceptance and obedience. Presumably, the alternative is expelling from the Church those who do not accept authority and obey it, but, on the evidence, the number would mount up pretty drastically, on all sides, if the Holy See finally resorted to *that* policy!

We must never forget the obvious meaning of Our Lord's parables of the Kingdom. Surely the Holy See cannot be singled out for blame just because Our Lord's own predictions about the presence of unholy members in His Holy Church prove to be true. The Holy See has tried to enforce discipline and must sometimes patiently wait for its efforts to take effect. We will quote one more example of the continuing efforts made by the Holy See to remind everyone of the Church's true liturgical norms, if only to show that the Holy See did continue to try to deal with the problem, as it continues to do so today, and can be expected to do in the future:

It is to be hoped that pastors of souls, rather than introduce novelties in the texts or rites of the sacred actions, will zealously lead the faithful to greater understanding of the character, the structure and the elements of the celebration and especially of the eucharistic prayer, so that they will take part in the celebrations more fully and with greater awareness. The power of the liturgy does not consist merely in the novelty and the variety of the elements, but rather in a more profound sharing in the mystery of salvation, present and active in the liturgical action. Only in this way can the

⁷ *Liturgiae Instaurationes*, "Notice to the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, Third Instruction on the Correct Implementation of the Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy (September 5, 1970), no. 1.

faithful, professing the same faith and offering to God the same prayer, save themselves and their brethren.⁸

Before simply concluding from shock or dislike that the liturgical “fruits” from Vatican II have now ripened or, in fact, have rotted on the tree, and that nothing will do but to conclude that the Council and its “reforms” were all a ghastly mistake, we should remind ourselves: (1) most of the “fruits” in question can be shown to have resulted from *not* following the Council’s prescriptions rather than from following them; and (2) a period of turbulence and confusion followed many Councils in the past, including Nicaea, Ephesus, Chalcedon, Lyons, Florence, and Trent.

For example, the comprehensive *Cambridge Medieval History* notes the following about the Council of Nicaea, the first General Council of the Church, which assembled in AD 325:

The great experiment was not an immediate success: the Nicene council rather opened than closed the history of Arianism on the larger stage, and it was not till after the lapse of half a century that wisdom was seen to be justified of its own works, though the very keenness of the struggle made the long delayed and hardly won triumph more complete in the end.⁹

It was precisely during the period *following* the Council of Nicaea that the great Saint Athanasius, the “Father of Orthodoxy,” had to do his work in defense of the faith (see Question 19). Far from the work for orthodoxy having been done by the Council, it fell to the faithful, especially the laity, under the inspiring leadership of Saint Athanasius, to uphold the decisions of the Council,¹⁰ and, in this respect, Nicaea was not all that different from Vatican II. What if the faithful had concluded from the initial, evident bad “fruits” of the Council of Nicaea that the Council

8 Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, Circular Letter on Eucharistic Prayers *Eucharistiae Participationem* (April 27, 1973), no. 19.

9 *The Cambridge Medieval History*, ed. H. M. Gwatkin and J. P. Whitney, “The Christian Roman Empire and the Foundation of the Teutonic Kingdoms,” 2nd ed., vol. I (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), p. 165.

10 See John Henry Cardinal Newman, *On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine*, ed. and intro. John Coulson (NY: Sheed and Ward, 1961).

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itself was illegitimate? Where would Saint Athanasius have been without the support of the faithful?

The battle was not against those who favored and upheld the Council of Nicaea but against those who did not, whatever their pretension to do so. Saint Athanasius' entire life was devoted to vindicating the decision of the Council which he had attended as a young deacon. And the obstacles he faced were not so different from the obstacles we face today in getting the true teaching of Vatican II accepted in place of the false and mythical "spirit of Vatican II" that some have propagated in the post-conciliar period. Saint Athanasius had to contend with exactly the same problem; he took note in one of his writings of those within the Church who were actually enemies of the Church and who, in his words, were "unwilling that the decrees of the Council should be enforced; they desire to enforce their own decisions; and they use the name of the Council."¹¹

It is not a new thing, in other words, that those within the Church disloyal to her authentic teachings and rulings, should try to use "the name of the Council" for their own ends. It did not start with Vatican II this phenomenon goes all the way back to the first General Council of the Church at the beginning of the fourth century. Things similar to what we have experienced since Vatican II—and much worse—can be documented in the periods following many of the other general councils in the history of the Church.

The Council of Ephesus in Asia Minor, the third General Council of the Church, ended in a hopeless deadlock, with two major factions of the Eastern bishops of the Church mutually excommunicating each other. Although the doctrinal issue between the two Patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria was settled later, the bitter theological passions led not only to the famous false "Robber Council," also held at Ephesus, at which the pope himself (Pope Saint Leo I) was "excommunicated," but also led, before a full twenty years had passed, to the convocation of still another legitimate general council to try to deal with the "fruits" of the one before.¹²

This latter convocation, the Council of Chalcedon, convened across the Bosphorus from Constantinople in AD 451, issued the cadenced, lucid, and majestic definition on the human and divine natures joined in one

11 Saint Athanasius, *Apol. Contr. Arian*, as quoted in *Historical Tracts of Saint Athanasius, Archbishop of Alexandria* (Oxford: James Parker and Co., J. G. F. and J. Rivington, London, 1873), p. 24.

12 For a brief account of the Council of Ephesus, see Hughes, *The Church in Crisis*, pp. 46-67.

divine Person of Our Blessed Lord which has endured in the Church to this day: "Perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity, the same truly God and truly man, always the same composed of rational soul and body, the same one in being with the Father as to the divinity and one in being with us as to His humanity, like unto us in all things but sin (cf. Heb. 4:15) . . . begotten from the Father before all ages as to divinity and in the latter days for us and our salvation was born as to His humanity from Mary, the Virgin Mother of God."¹³

No Catholic can doubt, judging from this definition, that the Holy Spirit was truly present at the Council of Chalcedon—as the Holy Spirit was also present at the Council of Ephesus in 431, where Mary's divine motherhood was defined. These doctrinal fruits are evident in the case of both of these Councils. Yet some of the other evident "fruits" of each of them did not quite as evidently stem from the Holy Spirit. From this we ought to learn a bit of caution when we begin talking about what the "fruits" of a particular council might be. Men, even Catholic prelates, may regrettably exhibit "all-too-human" weaknesses, but God can bring good even out of *them*, though we sometimes have to give Him time. Meanwhile, God also wants *us* to help make reparation.

Following Chalcedon, large-scale schisms resulted among the Eastern-rite Churches due to misunderstanding of conciliar teachings or resistance to them—again, a case of refusing to follow a council, not of following one. The "misunderstanding" following the Council of Chalcedon resulted in the propagation of the Monophysite heresy, in fact, which has endured for more than 1500 years, separating the Coptic, Ethiopian, Armenian, and Jacobite Churches from Catholic unity for most of these centuries. When we consider that the doctrinal or theological points at issue turn chiefly upon an "interpretation" of the theology of Saint Cyril of Alexandria, we are entitled to hope that Vatican II's laudable efforts in ecumenism may result in clearing up such "misunderstandings."

The dogmatic and disciplinary decrees of the Council of Trent, which had met to reform the Church in head and members, were widely ignored, for instance, by the parliament of the most powerful Catholic nation, France, which was to be later plagued by violent religious controversies over the spread of Jansenism and Gallicanism. After the Thirty Years War (1618-48), the Church in nearly all the states of Europe had fallen victim

¹³ Neuner and Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, p. 147.

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to royal absolutism. In the words of the historian Philip Hughes, “the year 1789 found the Catholic religion everywhere in chains, in the various European states, its vitality low indeed after generations of captivity to the Catholic kings.” In the words of another historian commenting on the extraordinary vitality infused into the Church by the Council of Trent, “the apostasy from the Catholic Church in the sixteenth century was followed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by wholesale apostasy from Christianity itself.”¹⁴

It is not true, in other words, that the “fruits” of a council all have to be evidently good before we can judge that council is good—for unbelief and apostasy in the world saw an unprecedented growth in the centuries following the Council of Trent, even though that Council accomplished what could be accomplished, given the situation. But we—and the Church—are still attempting to deal with the consequences of that widespread unbelief and apostasy from Christianity that has grown up in spite of the Tridentine reforms. Pope John XXIII called the Second Vatican Council in an attempt to begin to devise ways to deal with today’s massive unbelief and paganism (see Question 10).

Even the First Vatican Council, which now seems to us so much a timeless part of the Church’s Tradition, was in its own day regarded with considerable anxiety by some who feared for a Church increasingly exposed to the growing aggression of nationalistic and secularistic states. Reassuring one such “alarmist,” John Henry Newman, in a private letter, admitted that it was a “serious precedent” that Vatican I should have defined the dogma of infallibility of the pope “without definite and urgent cause.” Some critics not only feel vindicated by the confusion which has followed Vatican II; some of them even go so far as to imagine that this confusion somehow invalidates the acts of the Council, a notion we have shown to be without foundation in our answer to Question 2.

Cardinal Newman pointed out to his friend, who was fearful of the possible bad effects of Vatican I, exactly what we have established here, namely, that, in Newman’s own words, “there has seldom been a Council without great confusion after it—so it was even with the first—so it was with the third, fourth, and fifth—and the sixth which condemned Pope Honorius” (see Question 22). In spite of that, Newman counseled his

¹⁴ See Hughes, *The Church in Crisis*, p. 375. For the reference to “apostasy” see John Laux, *Church History* (Benziger Brothers, 1945), p. 517.

friend, basing his statement on his own vast knowledge of the history of the Church especially in her earlier centuries, "God will provide."¹⁵ If necessary, God will make up for what men have done wrong. God does not hold us responsible for whatever may occur at, or after, one of the Church's councils (except for our docility toward it). God does not ask us to judge of any council's fruits when, in the nature of things, we cannot live long enough to evaluate them in full perspective.

It is essential that the words of Our Lord, "By their fruits you shall know them" (Lk. 6:43-45) be applied with discernment. They certainly do not mean that the "learning Church" is assigned to sit in judgment on the "teaching Church."

In any case, the lessons of history indicate that a longer-range perspective is called for before we can justify a charge of evil "fruits" against the Second Vatican Council. We have to give the Council time. It still remains to be carried out. And with respect to the "discernment of spirits" underlying any valid application of the principle, "By their fruits you shall know them," we should remember that the discernment carried out by the hierarchical Magisterium, centered in Peter's successors, is to be preferred to that of any private judgment. Here the testimonies of both John Paul I and John Paul II, each of whom, at the beginning of his pontificate, unhesitatingly reaffirmed his loyalty to the Council and his intention of carrying out its program (see Question 1), assumes a very great importance. We must go forward with the pope(s), if we are going to remain truly Catholic.

The fault for better fruits having not yet come from the conciliar reform—and there have been many good fruits and the picture is far from black—can be laid at the door of those who failed to implement the liturgical reforms properly. Proper implementation of the reforms has been hampered by doctrinal deviations. That favorable results have been slower and less dramatic than we might have wished is but confirmation of Our Lord's Parable of the Leaven: "To what shall I compare the Kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and buried in three measures of meal, till it was leavened" (Lk. 13:20-21). Not only does leaven work slowly and silently, but it clearly depends upon a measure of necessary human cooperation (the kneading of the dough). Other parables of Our Lord would be equally appropriate to cite in this connection.

¹⁵ Ward, *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman*, p. 310.

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We have already mentioned that some members of the hierarchy have been less than realistic in measuring the extent to which liturgical aberrations and irregularities have scandalized many of their faithful. Bishops are not immune from pastoral failures in this or in other areas. However, such liturgical abuses and other evidences of desacralization are, we must repeat, clearly due to the *non-observance* of the liturgical reforms officially decreed. They are in contradiction to the many statements in conciliar and post-conciliar documents insisting upon the precise observance of liturgical norms.

But in the face of all this as, in the face of the other problems that will always confront us in this life, Christ still asks us for *faith*—and still asks us to take up our cross even with regard to the liturgy, if that is what is involved. Christ did not tell us that our faith in Him and His promises was supposed to be based on how well things were going in His Church. On the contrary, in many different ways, Our Lord made clear that His followers must expect the kind of setbacks and reverses that those who have tried to be loyal to Christ over the past years have in fact suffered. And it does not matter in the least that we are made to suffer by things happening *within* the Church; it is still our obligation to keep following Christ to the best of our ability. As a practical matter, this means following the pope and the Council, even if it means a suffering for us. The witness of suffering still is highly meritorious for the faithful Catholic, who “will complete what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of His Body, that is, the Church” (Col. 1:24).

Just as we concluded the answer to Question 15 and 16 with quotations from Saint John Bosco and Pope Saint Pius X about the disposition which the Catholic faithful should adopt toward a pope, so we may usefully conclude this section with a quotation from Saint Francis de Sales on the attitude we Catholics should adopt towards a general council of the Church:

At general councils there are many lively debates and a profound search for the truth through reasoning, theological argument and council interventions; however, once a subject has been debated, it is up to the council fathers, that is to say, the bishops, to decide—to reach a conclusion, to determine the mind of the council. Once their determination has been made, everyone should then acquiesce in it and accept it,

not because of the arguments that were advanced in favor of the final determination, or the research which preceded it, but rather because of the authority of the Holy Spirit.

Invisibly presiding at general councils, the Holy Spirit it is Who really judges and determines by means of the mouths of those of His servants who have been established by Him as the Pastors of Christendom.

All the reasoning, theological argument and council interventions are made, as it were, in front of the Church; while the actual decisions and determinations of the council fathers are made in the sanctuary, where the Holy Spirit does speak through the mouths of the visible heads of the local Churches, just as Jesus Christ promised.¹⁶

Thus, Saint Francis de Sales, a Doctor of the Church, shows himself possessed of the simple faith of a child, which Christ asks of all of us.

¹⁶ Saint Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*, trans. Dom Henry Benedict Mackey, OSB (Rockford, IL: TAN Publishers, 1997), bk. II, chap. 14.

Question 18

Why cannot the pope allow the Latin Tridentine Mass, for those who prefer it, alongside the New Order of the Mass?

Note to the Revised Edition: Since the first edition of this book was published in 1981, the pope *has* allowed the Latin Tridentine Mass, for those who prefer it, alongside the New Order of the Mass—but under certain conditions which have not always been necessarily obtained everywhere that a Tridentine Mass has perhaps been desired by some of the faithful. For one thing, some bishops have not exhibited the same willingness that the pope has exhibited for those faithful who continue to prefer the Tridentine Mass. Nevertheless, by the Congregation for Divine Worship's *Quattuor Abhinc Annos* in 1984, and Pope John Paul II's 1988 Apostolic Letter *Ecclesia Dei*, an indult, or exception to the Church's normal rule, has been allowed for the celebration of the Tridentine Mass under the conditions specified in the two documents mentioned (see Appendices V and VI for the full texts of both documents). Both documents will also be discussed in the Afterword to this revised edition. Meanwhile, we have elected to reprint the answer to Question 18 that follows substantially as it appeared in the original edition. Readers will understand thereby how the question was posed and answered at that time when there was no indication at all that the Church would ever allow again the celebration of the Tridentine Mass once the New Order of the Mass had been promulgated following the mandate of Vatican Council II. There is still no clear indication that the Tridentine Mass will ever be allowed as anything but an exception to the Church's general rule, as a matter of fact; and it is still in no way to be considered a separate "rite" within the Church, at least not yet. But see the Afterword for a further discussion of this important topic.



In the experience of the authors, no question is asked more frequently than this one by those who in one degree or another are concerned about or are tempted to reject the course the Church has followed since Vatican II. One encouraging thing about the way the question is framed is that the pope's authority to decide which Mass or Masses may be celebrated seems to be implicitly recognized in it. This, after all, is the key issue of the whole traditionalist question.

To the question of whether the Pope could allow the Tridentine Mass to be said alongside of the *Novus Ordo*, the answer would have to be that, for good and sufficient reasons, he could. There are those who do not question the validity of the *Novus Ordo* but who value the beauty and venerable character of the Tridentine Mass and would like to see retained in the Church this great treasure, which was normative for the Church for so many centuries. They believe it ought to be restored even if not fully on a par with the New Order of the Mass, at least it should be allowed now and then; certainly it should not be prohibited or “banned.” According to this way of thinking, it seems scandalous to some that what the Church *required* for so many years could now be forbidden. So it is thought that perhaps the Tridentine Mass could be said at least on special occasions.

Now it seems clear that the pope could allow a partial restoration of the Tridentine Mass in this fashion. In fact, Pope Paul VI did that very thing in giving an indult to the hierarchy of England and Wales to allow the celebration of Tridentine Masses on special occasions. Whether Pope John Paul II might extend that kind of privilege—or whether it would satisfy large numbers of Traditionalists if he did—is a matter that remains unclear at the moment of writing. But for pastoral reasons, and for the good of the Church, the pope certainly could allow the old Roman Missal to be used.

To the extent that he readmitted the Tridentine Mass as a regular “option” for the *Novus Ordo*, however, we must be clear in our minds about *what* the pope would then be doing: he would be exempting those who chose to exercise their “option” of attending a Tridentine Mass from the liturgical reforms requested by a general council of the Church. Vatican Council II did decree, *inter alia*:

The rite of Mass is to be revised in such a way that the intrinsic nature and purpose of its several parts, as well as the connection between them, may be more clearly manifested, and that devout and active participation by the faithful may be more easily achieved.

For this purpose the rites are to be simplified, due care being taken to preserve their substance. Parts which with the passage of time came to be duplicated, or were added with little advantage, are to be omitted. Other parts which suffered loss through accidents of history are to be restored

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to the vigor they had in the days of the holy Fathers, as may seem useful or necessary.¹

The revised Roman Missal published in 1969 represented the results of the Holy See's efforts to fulfill this mandate of the Council. To restore the use of the older, unrevised Roman Missal alongside the new, revised one would not only mean going back on what the Council, after long deliberation, desired as regards the liturgy, it could also re-inaugurate a new round of liturgical confusion among the great mass of the faithful. The New Order of the Mass in the vernacular is now what the faithful are accustomed to, just as they were accustomed to the Tridentine Mass in Latin when all the original changes began. If serious consequences have come from upsetting the habits of worship of the faithful without careful preparation and explanation—and the whole phenomenon of "Traditionalism" to which this book has been addressing itself testifies to the seriousness of some of the consequences of liturgical change—then the possible consequences of still more changes, even those aimed at a restoration of the Tridentine Mass, would surely have to be carefully considered in the light of the Church's experience with the changes that have been made up to now. It could not be excluded that a restoration of the Tridentine Mass alongside the *Novus Ordo* could split the unity of the Roman Rite which the old Roman Missal of Pope Saint Pius V originally did so much to bring about (see Question 4).

None of this is to say, however, that the pope could not for pastoral reasons admit both the old and the new Missals—the old becoming a kind of separate "rite," as it were. There is no intrinsic reason, in the nature of things, why the old Missal could not be used alongside the new Missal, or why the Tridentine Mass could not be permitted by Church authority as an alternate rite for those bishops, priests, and laity so desiring it and requesting it of the Supreme Pontiff. This is a matter of Church discipline and government; and, if the common good of the Church would seem to warrant such a departure from the traditional liturgical uniformity characteristic of the Roman Rite, it could doubtless be considered and granted by the Roman Pontiff. Whether it will or not is another question.

We cannot leave this subject, however, without taking note of the fact that a request to allow the Tridentine Mass alongside the *Novus Ordo*

1 Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 50.

was actually made to Pope Paul VI by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre. One of the things that Archbishop Lefebvre requested of Pope Paul VI when he visited the Pope in September 1976, was the right to celebrate the Tridentine Mass alongside the *Novus Ordo*. "You would like to see recognized the right to celebrate Mass in various places of worship according to the Tridentine rite," the pope responded to the Archbishop later, on October 11, 1976. "You wish also to continue to train candidates for the priesthood according to your criteria 'as before the Council,' in seminaries apart, as at Ecône."

The answer that the pope gave for being obliged to decline the request was an interesting one. He did not say that the Tridentine Mass could never be celebrated alongside the New Order of the Mass, but he pointed out that those who desire this appear to desire it on grounds that are incompatible with the loyalty to the Church required of Catholics. It is not merely a matter of preferring the old and disliking the new. It involves the rejection of the new on the grounds that it is not "Catholic," that the supreme authority of the Catholic Church has attempted to impose on the faithful a rite contrary to Catholic Tradition; and this, in turn, involves the judgment that a pope and a general council of the Church did, in fact, depart from Tradition. Indeed, the slogan of at least some of the Traditionalists has been, in fact, "Give us back the Catholic Mass!"

The problem is not just liturgical, in other words; the problem is theological. The problem is not just "pastoral," it is doctrinal. It involves the faith itself, and the necessity that Catholics accept *on* faith and *in* obedience what the competent authority in the Church legitimately teaches and decrees, in disciplinary as well as doctrinal matters. We have already shown that this is the attitude which, according to strict Catholic Tradition, Catholics must adopt towards the teachings and decisions of a general council of the Church (Question 2) and towards those of a pope (Questions 3 and 8). We have further illustrated the *disposition* with which Catholics ought to accept the decisions of a pope (Questions 15 and 16) and those of a general council (Question 17).

"What is indeed at issue," as Pope Paul VI wrote to Archbishop Lefebvre:

... is the question—which must truly be called fundamental—of your clearly proclaimed refusal to recognize in its entirety, the authority of the Second Vatican Council and that of

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the pope. This refusal is accompanied by an action that is orientated towards propagating and organizing what must indeed, unfortunately, be called a rebellion. This is the essential issue, and it is truly undeniable.

A single bishop without a canonical mission does not have . . . the faculty of deciding in general what the rule of faith is or of determining what Tradition is. In practice you are claiming that you alone are the judge of what Tradition embraces. You say that you are subject to the Church and faithful to Tradition by the sole act that you obey certain norms of the past that were decreed by the predecessors of him to whom God has today conferred the powers given to Peter. That is to say, on this point also, the concept of "Tradition" that you invoke is distorted.

Pope Paul VI's letter of October 11, 1976, from which this passage is taken, is of such importance in explaining the real issues and the attitude taken by Church authority with regard to the Traditionalists that we are reprinting it *in toto* in Appendix IV. Anyone who believes that Church authority has been unjust towards the Traditionalists owes it to himself to study carefully the complete text of this 1976 letter of Pope Paul VI to Archbishop Lefebvre; it is a document which, if it had become adequately known when it was first issued, could have precluded much of the confusion over the Archbishop Lefebvre case which has unfortunately prevailed.

For this is not just a matter of one pope declining to accede to traditionalist desires because his own personal stewardship of the papacy is called into question by the requests made of him; this is a matter of Tradition and of the authority of the Catholic Church as it has always been understood in the true sense.

And this is at bottom a doctrinal question, not merely a disciplinary question; it involves the teaching of the Church on the obedience which all Catholics owe to the legitimate acts of the Church's divinely-constituted authority. Although the Council and the Holy See decreed and carried out far-reaching changes in the Church's life and worship (proving thereby, in fact, that such things *could* be changes), no pope and no council will ever change Catholic *doctrine* on the nature of true authority in the Church, and on the obedience of the faithful which is owed to it for the simple reason that they *cannot* change it.

The position that every pope must take towards those who remove themselves from the authority of the Catholic Church and constitute themselves in some "little church" of their own is the position that Leo XIII took towards one of the "little churches" which found the leadership of the Church in his day wanting:

Its members pretend that their sole preoccupation is to affirm the proper and original right of the Church, that they have nothing more at heart than to protect her liberty from every hostile action. . . .

It is certainly true that no man of good sense will ever believe that some private individuals or some bishops have more at heart the rights and liberty of the Church than has the Holy See itself, the Mother and Mistress of all the Churches. Or that in order to procure this good, the Roman Church needs to be prodded by those who, in order to be and to be held as good Catholics, owe the Roman Church submission and obedience before all else. . . .

Therefore, there can be no legitimate cause for these men, whoever were the first leaders of those concerned today, to be separated from the most holy communion of the Catholic world. Let them not rely on the upright quality of their conduct, not on their fidelity to discipline, not on their zeal in safeguarding teaching and stability in religion. Does not the Apostle say plainly that without charity all this profiteth nothing? (1 Cor. 13:3). . . .

From this it follows also that they cannot promise themselves any of the graces and fruits of the perpetual sacrifice and of the sacraments which, although they are sacrilegiously administered, are nonetheless valid and serve in some measure that *form* and *appearance* of piety which Saint Paul mentions (cf. 1 Cor. 13:3) and which Saint Augustine speaks of at greater length: "The form of the branch," says the latter with great precision, "may still be visible, even apart from the vine, but the invisible life of the root can be preserved only in union with the stock. That is why the corporal sacraments, which some keep and use outside the unity of Christ, can preserve the appearance

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of piety. But the invisible and spiritual virtue of true piety cannot abide there any more than feeling can remain in an amputated member” (Serm. LXXI, in Mt. 32).²

Those who have rejected the New Order of the Mass and the authority of the Church to impose it may have sometimes preserved “the appearance of piety”—but many of them have also thereby cut themselves off from the Church. Although the pope could restore the old Roman Missal as a pastoral option, he could surely never admit as the *reason* for doing it the belief that the Church has established something less than “Catholic” in the *Novus Ordo*.

² Pope Leo XIII, Letter *Exima nos Laetitia* to the Bishop of Poitiers (July 19, 1893), in O’Gorman, *The Church*, pp. 291-293.

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Why has there been such tolerance in the Church for modernist and liberal dissenters, and such severity towards Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre and others who prefer the Tridentine Mass?

In July 1976, Pope Paul VI suspended retired Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre *a divinis*, that is, from all priestly functions, after the latter had ordained thirteen seminarians at the Seminary he had founded in Ecône, Switzerland, disobeying a specific order from the Holy Father that he *not* ordain them. Subsequently, Archbishop Lefebvre ordained still other priests and deacons in defiance of the Pope, including dozens of them after the election of Pope John Paul II.¹ The archbishop publicly declared that he was “encouraged” by the fact that Pope John Paul II did not immediately condemn these later ordinations.²

In addition, against the wishes of other bishops—and in contravention of canon law, it must, sadly, be said—Archbishop Lefebvre several times has entered dioceses in Europe, North America, and Latin America to administer various sacraments as well as to celebrate the Tridentine Mass for those refusing to accept the pope’s authority in the matter of the *Novus Ordo*. Although the Masses celebrated thus were no doubt “valid” Masses because the archbishop is a validly ordained bishop, they were clearly not “licit,” as local ordinaries have often had to point out publicly.³ However, insofar as he has heard confessions where he had no jurisdiction—like the priests of other *petites églises*, “little churches”—he may *not* have conferred a valid absolution, since, in the case of confession, the minister must have jurisdiction for validity, except in cases of danger of death.⁴

In addition to functioning without regard to the authority of the Pope, of the local bishop, or of canon law, the Archbishop made it quite clear in his many writings, speeches, and acts that he did not fully accept various documents and decrees of the Second Vatican Council, since he believed they embody what he considered to be doctrinal errors opposed to apostolic Tradition.

1 *National Catholic Register* (January 14, 1979 and July 15, 1979).

2 As quoted in the *New York Times* (August 16, 1979).

3 See, for example, the letter of the Bishop of Epinal in *Documentation Catholique* (4 Mars 1979), no. 1759, p. 246; or the article in *Our Sunday Visitor* (August 19, 1979).

4 Henry Davis, *Moral and Pastoral Theology*, pp. 236 ff.

He was quoted as saying: "The criterion of truth in the Church is Tradition. In doubtful cases, it is there we must look."⁵ However, judging by his actions in ignoring the Pope and the Council, he seemed to forget the very important "Tradition" that Catholics are *subject* to the pope and to councils of the Church. There is no instructed Catholic who can really plead ignorance of the *defined* doctrine of the pope's supreme authority in the Church; assent to his teachings and obedience to his decrees are consequently owed to him by all Catholics, as we have already seen (Questions 3 and 8). All Catholics are similarly subject to the decisions of ecumenical councils, as we have also seen (Question 2). Indeed, the great Pope Pius XII ventured to teach that it is Christ Himself, "Who, even if He is not seen, presides over the councils of the Church and directs them with His light."⁶

Thus, to accuse a pope and an ecumenical council of promoting errors in faith is a position which is impossible to reconcile with professing the traditional Catholic faith. There can be no justification, on traditional grounds, for a Catholic bishop to defy the legitimate authority of the Roman pontiff and reject doctrines of an ecumenical council; no bishop doing it could possibly be acting for Him who was "obedient unto death, even death on a Cross" (Phil. 2:8). Moreover, in setting himself up as the judge of what belongs to the unchangeable Catholic Tradition and what does not, Archbishop Lefebvre usurped a role that properly belongs to the Church herself (see Questions 6 and 18).

Following the election of the Polish Cardinal Karol Wojtyla as Pope John Paul II, Archbishop Lefebvre, along with many other Traditionalists, began to talk about accepting Vatican Council II as "interpreted according to Catholic Tradition." He even claimed that, in the meeting he had with Pope John Paul II in Rome in November 1978, the Pontiff "approved" of this new formula of his.⁷ However, unless the archbishop had admitted that Tradition is authentically interpreted only by the authority of the Church, he did not really adopt any new position here; for if he insisted upon the right or prerogative of interpreting Tradition himself, according to his own private judgment, he was still out of line, and nothing would have been settled by his adoption of this new formula. Indeed, nothing ever was.

5 As quoted in *World Trends* (February, 1973).

6 Pope Pius XII, encyclical *Mystici Corporis*, no. 50.

7 *Documentation Catholique*, no. 1759, p. 243.

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It is possible to understand and to sympathize with a “reaction” against the errors and abuses that have become manifest within the Catholic Church in the post-conciliar years. However, the reaction of Archbishop Lefebvre and of some other Traditionalists was surely wide of the mark in ascribing these errors and abuses to the Second Vatican Council and to the Pope rather than to the individuals responsible for them. It is even possible to understand and sympathize with the view that too many of the errors and abuses that have surfaced have gone uncorrected. It has mystified many of the faithful as to how certain people, especially certain theologians, have been able to get away with so much in the post-conciliar years. How can the mass media notice that things have almost gotten out of hand in the Church—as in the *Life* magazine article entitled “The Pope’s Unruly Flock”—while some members of the sacred hierarchy of the Church, charged with correcting such situations, apparently do not even notice? At any rate, they have shown few signs, year after year, of wanting to do anything about what the average instructed Catholic can only regard as scandalous. This has been a mystery for many of the faithful and to the authors, but it does *not* justify any Catholic in removing himself from the legitimate authority of the Church. A mother remains a mother even when she sometimes fails to act as one. After all, in what do errors and abuses consist, by whomever committed, but in teaching or acting apart from what the sacred hierarchy of the Church has officially decided?

Archbishop Lefebvre has been compared by some of his admirers to Saint Athanasius, the great fourth century champion of orthodoxy against the Arians. But this great Doctor of the Church devoted his whole life to (and was persecuted for) *upholding* the teachings and rulings of the great ecumenical Council of Nicaea (325 AD). All this took place during a period when many Christians, including many bishops, acceding to intense pressures from the Roman emperors and the Roman society of the times, agreed in one degree or another to hold the Council of Nicaea as of little or no account. During the period following this council, in fact, perhaps a majority of the Catholic bishops in the East, many under pressure from the Roman emperor, came to depart in one degree or another from Nicene orthodoxy. This was the period of which Saint Jerome remarked that “the whole world woke and groaned to find itself Arian.”⁸ Yet assembled in a new general council, the Council of Constantinople, which convened in 381, many of these same Arianizing bishops upheld Nicene orthodoxy

8 Hughes, *The Church in Crisis*, p. 42.

after all—a striking example, indeed, that (1) turmoil can follow a general council and many can err or fall away, even bishops, but that (2) general councils do enjoy the protection of the Holy Spirit against heresy!⁹

By not fully accepting the Second Vatican Council, Archbishop Lefebvre thus forgets that the inerrancy of general councils in those of their teachings confirmed by a pope is one of the most important of all Church Traditions. Saint Athanasius never challenged the authority of the reigning popes of his time. Indeed, it was through the steadfast determination of the Roman pontiffs that Athanasian orthodoxy finally triumphed over the heresies, deceptions, and cruelties of the Arian party seeking to shred the Mystical Body of Christ.

Saint Athanasius consistently sought the support of the popes of his day in his battle for Catholic orthodoxy. At one point he appealed to Pope Saint Julius, and even fled to Rome for refuge. The Pope vindicated him, and they forged an alliance. Saint Athanasius later persuaded Pope Saint Damasus to act against the Arians; and his successor as Archbishop of Alexandria, his own brother Peter, was later obliged to flee to Pope Damasus in Rome for refuge again, just as, more than thirty years earlier, Saint Athanasius had fled to Pope Julius for the same reason (see also Question 18).¹⁰

Thus Archbishop Lefebvre's supporters can in no way liken him to a modern Saint Athanasius; the analogy does not fit.

It has often been asked what was wrong with Archbishop Lefebvre's teaching seminarians exactly "as all seminarians were trained prior to Vatican II." The answer is that all Catholic seminarians before Vatican II were taught, e.g., the primacy of the pope, the binding nature of the decisions of an ecumenical council, the ordinary jurisdiction of Catholic bishops within their own sees, the authority of the Church over both sacred Scripture and sacred Tradition, etc. All Catholic seminarians before Vatican II, in other words, were trained to be loyal to the Church with the pope at the head of it, in the memorable words of Cardinal Journet (see Question 14). That is not the way Archbishop Lefebvre's seminarians were trained. They were trained in a "petite église" that is not under the jurisdiction of the pope—this is not "traditional" seminary training!

9 Ibid., pp. 34-45; on this whole period, see also John Henry Cardinal Newman, *The Arians of the Fourth Century* (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, Inc., 1968).

10 See Msgr. Louis Duchesne, *Early History of the Christian Church: From Its Foundation to the End of the Fifth Century*, vol. II (NY: Longmans, Green and Company, 1922), p. 157 ff.; p. 368; also p. 310 ff.

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We cover all this ground not to draw up an indictment against Archbishop Lefebvre. In fact, we have deliberately avoided mentioning the Archbishop to the extent possible in these pages because we have generally wanted to focus on issues, not on personalities.

However, it has been necessary in a work on this subject to face the question of Archbishop Lefebvre and to review the Archbishop's position if only to make the point, with respect to the Holy See's "severity" toward him, that however he may have been provoked, the Archbishop, unfortunately, committed some serious breaches of Catholic Church law and custom. Even his supporters have to concede this. Whatever the solution to *l'affaire Lefebvre*—and the authors still hope and pray for a reconciliation at the time of this writing—the Archbishop's true situation has to be taken into account. According to his own lights, his own position was a highly irregular one. Pope Paul VI was obliged to remark truly, if sadly: "Our predecessors to whose discipline he presumes to appeal would not have tolerated a disobedience as obstinate as it is pernicious for so long a period as we have patiently done."¹¹

It is worthy of note that, while he lived, Pope Paul VI never resorted to his ultimate canonical weapon, excommunication; nor, at the time of this writing, had Pope John Paul II taken or even hinted at any such action. Thus it is hard to argue that the Holy See has been unduly severe with him. (Note to the Revised Edition: For the further measures taken against Archbishop Lefebvre by the Holy See, including, finally, his excommunication following his illicit ordination of four bishops, see the Afterword.)

Doubts about Archbishop Lefebvre's treatment do not so much focus on the measures which the Pope, reluctantly and after considerable deliberation, took against Archbishop Lefebvre, for both Paul VI and John Paul II tempered these measures with a willingness to meet with the archbishop and discuss his case further. Doubts arise, rather, from the belief that while the Holy See did finally move against him, a Traditionalist, it has consistently *failed* to move against the modernists, the progressives, and the dissenters "on the left." Like those bishops who are quick to issue statements against Traditionalist chapels and forbid attendance at them while ignoring overt dissent from *Humanae Vitae* and other Church teachings among their priests and flocks, the Holy See is seen by some to be

11 Pope Paul VI, Address to the Consistory of Cardinals (June 27, 1977), as quoted in *L'Osservatore Romano* (English edition, July 7, 1977).

following a double standard: severity towards the Traditionalists, indulgence towards the progressives. It is, of course, much more difficult to maintain this thesis since the Holy See moved decisively in late 1979 to investigate the work of theologian Edward Schillebeeckx; and, even more decisively, revoked Father Hans Küng's mandate to teach theology. Nevertheless some still maintain that Church authority is consistently harder on the Traditionalists than it is on the progressives. It is unfortunately true that dissenters "on the left" were not publicly disciplined during the pontificate of Pope Paul VI, even while sanctions against Archbishop Lefebvre were decreed. To the extent that such a double standard seemed to exist in this regard, it is easy to understand how it would cause resentment.

Let us examine more carefully, though, this charge of a double standard, especially as regards the actions of the Holy See (and those whom the Holy See has been able to influence). We have already remarked that we live in a period when it is surprising how much theologians, speaking against the Church's teachings, can get away with. Nevertheless, it is *not* true that only dissenters on the "right" have been the object of discipline by Church authorities. What is true is that until the cases of Fathers Schillebeeckx and Küng came along, some of the cases of those "on the left" did not have the same media interest as the case of Archbishop Lefebvre, and hence they were not publicized to the same extent.

However, there was nevertheless a great stir caused in Italy in 1975, for example, when the Vatican deposed the Archbishop of Ravenna, Salvatore Baldassarri, aged 68, the so-called "Red Archbishop," and appointed Monsignor Ersilio Tonini, official Administrator for Ravenna, to replace him. Archbishop Baldassarri had begun carrying on "a continuous dialogue with workers, visiting strikers and holding opinions in questions of celibacy and divorce diverging from those of the Vatican."¹² This was a case, it should be noted, where a *bishop* was disciplined. The Marxist theologian Father Giulio Girardi was similarly removed in 1975 from his teaching post by his Salesian superior and later suspended *a divinis* by the Holy See.¹³

A much more important case, in view of the rank of ecclesiastic involved, concerned Don Giovanni Battista Franzoni, Abbot of the Roman Basilica of Saint Paul's Outside the Walls. Abbot Franzoni was first suspended *a divinis* and later defrocked by his monastic superiors by order of the pope

¹² Story in *Timor Domini* (Switzerland: November 23, 1975).

¹³ Story in *La Libre Belgique* (September 20, 1975), "*L'Attitude Courageuse de Certains Evêques Italiens*"; see also the *New York Times* (September 5, 1976).

for publicly promoting Marxist class warfare, rejecting the teaching of the Holy See on *Humanae Vitae*, and disputing the Church's doctrine on the indissolubility of marriage. A Vatican decree on August 4, 1976, reduced this *ex-Abbot* Franzoni to the lay state—a more severe punishment than Archbishop Lefebvre's suspension *a divinis*.

Again in 1975, under fire from the Vatican, the Swiss Dominican Stephan Pfürtner, O.P., who contradicted the Church's teaching on contraception, abortion, divorce, and homosexuality, was similarly obliged to resign his prestigious post as professor of moral theology at the venerable Catholic University of Fribourg, Switzerland. He later applied for laicization.¹⁴

Other not well-publicized actions against leftist dissenters concerned, for example, the case of Bishop Francesco Tortora of Gerace-Rocco in Calabria who suspended *a divinis* the leftist pastor of San Rocco, Don Natale Bianchi, and put the whole parish under interdict. The Vicar-General for the Diocese of Rome, took a similar action against the pastor of the Roman parish of the Nativity, Don Luigi Dalla Torre. Four Marxist professors, Fathers Brugnolli, Diaz-Alegria, Pin, and Tuffari were dismissed from the Jesuit Gregorian University in Rome. Cardinal Siri of Genoa and Cardinal Florit of Florence also took decisive action against various priests and religious influenced by Marxist ideology.¹⁵

Much closer to home for North American Catholics was the action of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith which, in the summer of 1977, sent a letter to the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, the Reverend Pedro Arrupe, S.J., ordering the *Imprimi potest* removed from the book *The Church and the Homosexual* by Father John McNeil, S.J. The Sacred Congregation declared in its letter that :

We find it extraordinary that a book so clearly contradicting the moral teaching of the Church would be published a few days after the publication of *Persona Humana* [Vatican Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics], a document of this Congregation treating in part of the same question.¹⁶

14 *L'Osservatore Romano* (English edition, March 13, 1975).

15 Story in *La Libre Belgique* (September 20, 1975).

16 Text of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's letter on Father McNeil's book is to be found in *Origins*, vol. 7, no. 39 (NC Documentary Service: March 16, 1978).

In the summer of 1979, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith similarly ruled that the controversial book *Human Sexuality*, a work originally commissioned by the Catholic Theological Society of America, contained fundamental errors and invited the five authors of the book to correct these errors. The views expressed in the book had also been criticized and disavowed by the U.S. bishops' Committee on Doctrine when the book first appeared.¹⁷ In spite of this condemnation by Rome and the U.S. bishops' doctrine committee, *Human Sexuality* has in the minds of many served as a prime example of blatant, gross error going publicly uncorrected by the authorities of the Church. But, in some cases of this kind, it may simply be a matter of the time it takes for the authorities to get around to dealing with a particular book or theologian—Rome traditionally has been both cautious and deliberate in such matters—or with the fact that the media rarely publicize salutary acts of authority to the same extent as sensational dissent.

More examples could be given where Rome or those Rome has been able to prevail upon have disciplined progressivist or leftist priests and professors challenging Church discipline or doctrine. In July 1977, a liberal Swiss newspaper even complained that the pope was handling the "Traditionalists" with kid gloves while being unduly harsh towards liberals!¹⁸

Additional examples could also be given of prelates in other countries who have courageously disciplined rebels against Catholic teaching. Pope Paul VI, for example, was unremitting in encouraging bishops to uproot the "epidemic of errors" diminishing the credibility of the Catholic Church before the world.

For example, in his December 8, 1970 Apostolic Exhortation, *To the Bishops of the World Commemorating the Fifth Anniversary of the Close of the Second Vatican Council*, the Pope urged:

Dearly beloved brothers, let us not be reduced to silence for fear of criticism, which is always possible and may at times be well-founded. However necessary the function of theologians, it is not to the learned that God has confided the duty of authentically interpreting the faith of the Church: that faith is borne by the life of the people whose bishops

17 See "Rome Scores Sexuality Study," *National Catholic Register* (August 19, 1979).

18 *Das Vaterland* (July, 1977).

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are responsible for them before God. It is for the bishop to tell the people what God asks them to believe.

This demands much courage of each one of us. . . . This is not the time to ask ourselves, as some would have us do, whether it is really useful, opportune and necessary to speak; rather it is time for us to take the means to make ourselves heard. For it is to us bishops that Saint Paul's exhortation to Timothy is addressed: "Before God and before Jesus Christ, who is to be judge of the living and the dead, I put this duty to you, in the name of his appearing and of his kingdom: proclaim the message and, welcome or unwelcome, insist on it. Refute falsehood, correct error, call to obedience—but do all with patience and with the intention of teaching. The time is sure to come when, far from being content with sound teaching, people will be avid for the latest novelty and collect themselves a whole series of teachers according to their own tastes; and then, instead of listening to the truth, they will turn to myths. Be careful always to choose the right course; be brave under trials; make the preaching of the Good News your life's work, in thoroughgoing service" (2 Tim. 4:1-15).

Nobody can say that Rome has not kept the faith or that she has not been vigilant. In the years following the Council, a whole series of documents emanating from the Holy See and the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith witness to the Holy See's vigilance to preserve the integrity of the faith "that comes to us from the Apostles."

Perhaps the most notable are the following: Encyclical *Mysterium Fidei*, September 3, 1965; Encyclical *On Priestly Celibacy*, June 24, 1967; *Credo of the People of God*, June 30, 1968; Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, July 25, 1968; *Declaration on Safeguarding the Incarnation and the Most Holy Trinity from Some Recent Errors*, February 21, 1972; *Declaration in Defense of the Catholic Doctrine on the Church Against Certain Errors of the Present Day*, *Mysterium Ecclesiae*, June 24, 1973; *Declaration on Abortion*, November 18, 1974; *Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics* *Persona Humana*, December 29, 1975; *Declaration on the Question of Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood*, October 15, 1976.

We may be confident that the Holy See will stay on the course that has been charted. Not too long after his election, Pope John Paul II told a group of American bishops making their *ad limina* visit to Rome that purity of doctrine and sound discipline would be priority aims of his pontificate:

This, then, is my own deepest hope today for the pastors of the Church in America, as well as for all the pastors of the universal Church: "that the sacred deposit of Christian doctrine should be more effectively guarded and taught." The sacred deposit of God's word, handed on by the Church, is the joy and strength of our people's lives. It is the only pastoral solution to the many problems of our day. To present this sacred deposit of Christian doctrine in all its purity and integrity, with all its exigencies and in all its power is a holy, pastoral responsibility; it is, moreover, the most sublime service we can render.

And the second hope that I would express today is a hope for the preservation of the great discipline of the Church—a hope eloquently formulated by John Paul I on the day after his election: "We wish to maintain intact the great discipline of the Church in the life of priests and of the faithful, as the history of the Church, enriched by experience, has presented it throughout the centuries, with examples of holiness and heroic perfection, both in the exercise of the evangelical virtues and in service to the poor, the humble, the defenseless."

These two hopes do not exhaust our aspirations or our prayers, but they are worthy of intense pastoral efforts and apostolic diligence. These efforts and diligence on our part are in turn an expression of real love and concern for the flock entrusted to our care by Jesus Christ, the chief Shepherd.¹⁹

The pope's letter to all bishops and priests of the Roman Rite upholding the discipline of celibacy in the Roman Rite certainly served to

¹⁹ Pope John Paul II, "Address to the Bishops of the Seventh Pastoral Region of the U. S." (November 9, 1978).

show that John Paul II meant business; reports of his stricter standards for laicization showed the same thing.²⁰

The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith followed up on these words of the Holy Father by issuing in April 1979, a declaration censuring a book by Father Jacques Pohier, a French Dominican, as containing "assertions manifestly at variance with Revelation and the Magisterium of the Church." This declaration indicated that for nearly a year the Sacred Congregation had been trying to get Father Pohier to "publicly correct his errors and to declare his entire adhesion to the teaching of the Church," failing which the declaration itself was being made public. Observers in France pointed out that in the case of a similar declaration regarding the errors of Father Hans Küng, the Holy See had waited for years before finally making its first judgment against the Swiss theologian public. It finally appeared only on February 14, 1975, although the anti-Church position of Father Küng had been publicly known since the late sixties.²¹ Thus, it became quite clear that the tempo of such judgments was being stepped up by Pope John Paul II.

This step-up in the tempo of actions against dissenting theologians was, of course, dramatically confirmed by the Holy See's actions in late 1979 concerning the by-then celebrated cases of Dutch theologian Father Edward Schillebeeckx and Swiss-born Tübingen theologian Father Hans Küng. Father Schillebeeckx was merely summoned to Rome for an investigation of some of the Christological opinions expressed in his book: *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology*. Still, it hardly seems likely that the Holy See will not continue to press this case if the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith finds that any of the Dutch theologian's Christological views do not square with the faith of the Church. What is documented in the case of Father Schillebeeckx is that he certainly has dissented from authentic Church doctrine on other matters. He belongs, for example, to a group of more than a dozen Dutch and Belgian theologians who in September 1968, issued a statement severely critical of both the manner and the matter of Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae Vitae*.²² It

20 "Tighter Ship is Pope's Goal as He Steers Vatican II Course, Observers Say," in *Our Sunday Visitor* (April 22, 1979).

21 The text of the Holy See's Declaration against Father Pohier, along with a commentary, can be found in *L'Homme Nouveau* (April 15, 1979).

22 For the statement of Father Schillebeeckx and other Dutch and Belgian theologians, see *Dossier sull' Humanae Vitae, a cura di Vittorio Varraia, Ptero Gribandi Editore* (Torino, Italy, 1969), pp. 86-88.

thus seems that the Holy See is on the right track in singling him out for investigation, especially in view of his prominence and reputation.

In the case of Father Hans Küng, however, the Holy See has symbolically but firmly grasped the whole prickly nettle of post-conciliar dissent and disloyalty. Father Küng has rather flamboyantly represented the prototype of this kind of dissent and loyalty—a theologian who insists on subjecting the teaching of the Church to *his* personal scrutiny rather than docilely accepting the ultimate judgment of the Church on his work, and who effectively takes his case not to his theological peers alone but directly to a mass reading audience and, indeed, to the mass media generally, thus disturbing and disorienting the faithful everywhere. Father Küng was obviously a prime target if there was ever to be effective ecclesiastical disciplinary action against anybody; it was thus no real surprise to anyone acquainted with the way the Church generally acts that the full weight of ecclesiastical censure eventually fell on him. The only surprise was the timing. On December 18, 1979, Father Küng's mandate to teach theology in the name of the Church was withdrawn; the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith officially declared that "Professor Hans Küng, in his writings, has departed from the integral truth of Catholic faith, and therefore he can no longer be considered a Catholic theologian nor function as such in a teaching role."²³

For most observers of Catholic affairs, this declaration about Hans Küng was long overdue. What such observers perhaps forget is that the Holy See has, historically, been slow and deliberate in such matters, lest any injustice be done. It is worth briefly reviewing the history of the Holy See's actions in the case of Father Küng because it demonstrates how the mills of Church authority, although they traditionally grind slowly, grind exceedingly fine. There is more than hope, there is certainty, that legitimate Church authority will eventually deal with the other dissenters who have deformed and misrepresented the truth that Christ committed into the hands of His Church.

To briefly review the case of Father Hans Küng, then: for over more than a decade both the Holy See and the German bishops reasonably, repeatedly, at first privately, and always charitably (as the tone of the final Vatican declaration itself proves) tried to get Professor Küng even to discuss his views with them, the constituted authorities of the Church.

²³ For the official documents concerning Father Hans Küng's censure, both by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and by the German bishops, see *Origins* (NC Documentary Service: January 3, 1980) vol. 9, no. 29.

As far back as 1967, Father Kūng was courteously advised by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) on the advisability of having discussions about his book *The Church*. The Congregation became even more concerned (understandably) after the publication in 1970 of Father Kūng's book *Infallible? An Inquiry*. In this later book, the Swiss theologian argued (1) that the Church's constant and universal teaching condemning birth control really qualified as an infallible teaching according to the Church's own definition of infallibility; yet (2) this teaching was so obviously *wrong* on its face, that the Church could not really be said to possess the charism of infallibility, contrary to what the First and Second Vatican Councils had taught. Rather, Father Kūng concluded, she was "indefectible in truth."

Such a position obviously constituted an open, flat denial of essential Church teaching, but Father Kūng systematically refused even to discuss his views with those who were, after all, the only competent authorities in the case! He seems to have been the one to have gone first to the press with his case, in July 1971, after which the Congregation confirmed that letters had indeed been written to him about his two books.²⁴

After a lengthy exchange of letters between him and the Congregation, Father Kūng still managed to avoid being pinned down; yet the Congregation still issued no outright condemnation of him. Instead on July 6, 1973, it issued its lucid Declaration in Defense of the Catholic Doctrine on the Church Against Certain Errors of the Present Day, *Mysterium Ecclesiae*. In this magisterial declaration, Father Kūng's name was not so much mentioned, but the Church's challenged teachings were nevertheless reaffirmed and clarified. It was not until February 1975, that the Congregation finally issued a condemnation of some of the opinions in both of Father Kūng's books, *The Church* and *Infallible? An Inquiry*, finally mentioning Father Kūng by name, although without any discussion because Father Kūng always steadfastly refused to enter into any discussion with the Congregation, meanwhile protesting the CDC's "procedures." Even then, the censure of certain of his opinions in the two books came in the most measured and restrained terms. Father Kūng was reminded that "ecclesiastical authority [had] granted him permission to teach sacred theology in the spirit of the doctrine of the Church, but not opinions that subvert this doctrine or call it into question."

²⁴ In *L'Osservatore Romano* (August 7, 1971).

Later, in 1977, the German bishops' conference finally managed to organize a meeting of several hours with Hans Küng about some of his views. However, the end result of trying to discuss his views with him proved to be no more fruitful than not discussing them, as far as the authentic teachings of the Church were concerned. And so the German bishops too were obliged to issue a statement warning against some of the opinions in still another Father Küng book, *On Being a Christian*.

By this time, Father Küng had written still another book *Existiert Gott?* ("Does God Exist?"), in which, according to Cardinal Joseph Höffner, a "promise" Father Küng had made to clarify his views was not carried out. And in the Spring of 1979 he went on to restate, in even stronger terms, an opinion about the Church's so-called "indefectibility in truth" (rather than "infallibility") which he had been warned against holding or teaching in the 1975 declaration of the CDF.

In the face of such surely impertinent defiance, the German bishops and the Holy See no doubt decided they finally had to act more strongly than they had to date in the case of Father Küng. It was only after more than a decade of this kind of defiance and obfuscation on Father Küng's part that Cardinal Höffner, in the statement he issued on behalf of the German bishops, was sadly obliged to speak of Father Küng's "flagrant violation" of conditions which he himself had presumably agreed to. Then the Holy See finally issued its declaration to the effect that Father Küng could no longer be considered a Catholic theologian.

Throughout this entire period of more than a decade, Church authority gave Father Küng the benefit of every doubt and plenty of time to pray and reflect on the course he was following. The fact of the matter, the inevitable conclusion, is that he himself obviously did not *want* to go on being a Catholic theologian. Instead, he *insisted* on affirming non-Catholic opinions, and so the Holy See, in removing his teaching faculties, was merely taking official cognizance of an accomplished fact—a fact accomplished by Father Küng himself.²⁵

The question might be asked why Church authority did not act sooner in the case of provocations so gross and so notorious as those offered

25 For the principal documents on which our brief "history" of the Holy See's dealings with Professor Küng was based, see, in addition to the document cited in note 23 to this question, *Origins* (NC Documentary Service), for the following dates: vol. 7, no. 24 (December 1, 1977); vol. 3, no. 7 (July 19, 1973); vol. 1, no. 39 (March 16, 1972). See also the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Declaration on Two Books of Professor Hans Küng" (February 15, 1975), in Eugene Kevane, *Creed and Catechetics: A Catechetical Commentary on the Creed of the People of God* (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1978), pp. 239-241.

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to it by Professor Kūng. The answer is that it is part of the authority possessed by the hierarchical Church to decide when it is necessary to move decisively, taking all factors into account. We Catholic faithful should be content that, in the case of Father Hans Kūng, both the Holy See, and the German bishops, have now finally acted. Consistent with the Church's own explanation of her action in this case, we can be sure that she will not fail to continue to act in the same fashion in similar cases.

Indeed, in June 1979, a new Apostolic Constitution on norms for ecclesiastical universities and faculties published by Pope John Paul II virtually insured that the Church will continue to act vigorously in cases of theological dissent similar to that of Hans Kūng.

This new Apostolic Constitution, entitled *Sapientia Christiana*, has strict new rules that "in studying and teaching Catholic doctrine, fidelity to the Magisterium of the Church is always to be emphasized" and that "those who teach disciplines concerning faith and morals must receive, after making their profession of faith, a canonical mission . . . for they do not teach on their own authority but by virtue of the mission they have received from the Church." Institutions subject to these new regulations are required to prepare new statutes, to be approved by the Holy See, in which both provisions for hiring teachers—and firing them—must be spelled out in accordance with the strict new Roman norms. The issuance of this document surely marks at least a first necessary step in dealing with theological "dissent." Nobody reading through it will conclude that the Pope was anything but very serious in issuing it and requiring compliance to it by faculties under direct pontifical jurisdiction.²⁶

In fairness to Pope Paul VI, we should point out that this very strict document, *Sapientia Christiana*, was virtually ready for promulgation at the time of his death. Its issuance was delayed by his death and by the death of Pope John Paul I less than two months later. Pope John Paul II then issued it as soon as practicable after his own pontificate was underway (in June 1979, although it was officially dated April 15, 1979). Those who have been anxious that Rome should "crack down" should realize that this has always been only a matter of time; Rome always proceeds with great deliberation. (Note to the Revised Edition: In 1990, Pope John Paul II issued yet another apostolic constitution on the Catholic university which

²⁶ For the complete text of the Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana*, see *Origins* (NC Documentary Service: June 7, 1979), vol. 9, no. 3.

applied to all Catholic colleges and universities, not just “ecclesiastical universities and faculties.” This document, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (ECE) required among other things that all professors of theology in Catholic institutions possess a “mandate from competent ecclesiastical authority” (the diocesan bishop), in accordance with the revised 1983 Code of Canon Law. In November 1999, the U.S. bishops—after a decade of Roman pressure—officially adopted an ECE “application document” applying the provisions of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* to the Catholic colleges and universities in the United States.

There can be no doubt, therefore, that Rome has continued and will continue to teach and discipline in her usual fashion—and to urge that the bishops of the world do the same. We *cannot* conclude, as far as the Holy See is concerned, that there is tolerance towards modernists and progressives with only a severity towards Traditionalists. In short, there is not, as far as the Holy See is concerned, any “double standard.” In the present climate, many departures from the Church’s doctrine and discipline may have been *tolerated* so far, but if they have been tolerated, it has been both “on the right” and “on the left.” The authorities of the Church have the responsibility for deciding when and how they will exercise the disciplinary authority they have from Christ. It is not for the laity to “demand” action, but to give the legitimate Church authorities time and leeway to try to restore discipline and order in today’s truly exceptional situation in the Church.

And if some especially notorious cases of “dissent” nevertheless continue to be unresolved as of this writing—that of Father Charles Curran at Catholic University in the United States comes to mind (although there are press reports that he too is now finally under investigation by the Holy See)²⁷—this does not mean that the Holy See has not amply informed the bishops concerned and given the example as well.

Certainly, on the evidence, there is no justification for a traditionalist rebellion on the grounds that the Church has ceased to function—to teach the saving truths and purvey the life-giving sacraments required for our salvation, as well as to correct those out of line with the authority which the Church possesses. Faithful Catholics owe it to the Church to give her time to cope with all the problems that have arisen in this day of gross disobedience and indiscipline. The popes have been working on the problem. Faithful Catholics must bear patiently with the Church and not lightly accuse her of a “double

27 “Rome scrutinizes U. S. Theologians,” *National Catholic Register* (December 7, 1979).

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standard." "If my mother is sick," Pope John Paul I advised, "if my mother by chance should become lame, I love her even more. It is the same in the Church. If there are—and there are—defects and shortcomings, our affection for the Church must never fail."²⁸



Addendum to the Revised Edition

Since the above answer to Question 19 turned out to be the place in this book where we principally discussed the subject of disciplining and correction by Church authority of those dissenting from Church teachings or disobeying Church disciplinary rulings and decisions, we believe we have to add more material here from the perspective of the more than two decades that have elapsed since the original publication of this book. At the time we wrote the above Answer, which was near the beginning of the pontificate of Pope John Paul II, we took note of the disciplining of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre by Pope Paul VI, on the one hand. On the other hand, we gave examples where dissident theologians and others "on the left" had also been subjected to Church discipline. There was no "double standard" being exercised by the Church; so we concluded.

At the time we wrote the original text, we were very encouraged by actions of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) in addressing dissent not only from Traditionalists but also from any and all quarters. The disciplining of Hans Küng was one such example. And there have been significant disciplinary actions against many dissenters, as will be demonstrated by examples given later in this chapter. Nonetheless, rejection of Church teaching and authority has persisted far more than it should have over the more than twenty years since the original publication of the book.

The Church has continued to proclaim the truth of the Faith, stress the need for the correct implementation of Vatican II, and call for both repentance by and action against those who dissent from Church teaching.

Pope John Paul II and the CDF, under the direction of Cardinal Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, have worked and written tirelessly to deal with error and dissent within the Church. For example, Pope John Paul II addressed aberrations in moral teaching in his encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*:

²⁸ Pope John Paul I, Address to a General Audience, "To Live the Faith" (September 13, 1978).

While exchanges and conflicts of opinion may constitute normal expressions of public life in a representative democracy, moral teaching certainly cannot depend simply upon respect for a process. . . . Dissent, in the form of carefully orchestrated protests and polemics carried on in the media, is opposed to ecclesial communion and to a correct understanding of the hierarchical constitution of the People of God. Opposition to the teaching of the Church's Pastors cannot be seen as a legitimate expression either of Christian freedom or of the diversity of the Spirit's gifts. When this happens, the Church's Pastors have the duty to act in conformity with their apostolic mission, insisting that the right of the faithful to receive Catholic doctrine in its purity and integrity must always be respected. "Never forgetting that he too is a member of the People of God, the theologian must be respectful of them, and be committed to offering them a teaching which in no way does harm to the doctrine of the faith."

As the Second Vatican Council reminds us, responsibility for the faith and the life of faith of the People of God is particularly incumbent upon the Church's Pastors.

It is, of course, not true that Church authority, especially the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, failed to measure up to the challenge. No, there were important, even numerous, instances to the contrary. The CDF, for example, did continue to make periodic judgments concerning various doctrinal deviations, sometimes condemning writings, and even individuals by name, suspending or removing the latter in some cases. From time to time, some bishops took similar disciplinary measures as well. There were even some excommunications. In some other cases, the individuals subjected to judgment decided to leave the Church voluntarily.

In regard to all this, we can make mention, without aiming to provide an exhaustive list, of the following cases, which follow upon those we have already cited above in our original answer:

- 1983—Archbishop Peter Martin Ngô-Dinh-Thuc, former archbishop of Hanoi, Vietnam, was excommunicated together with five other bishops whom he had unlawfully ordained. Shortly before his death in December

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1984, he publicly retracted his errors and his illicit acts wherein he had rejected Vatican Council II and the authority of the pope.

- 1983—In July, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith asked Indian Cardinal Parecatil to remove seminary professor Father Abraham Koothhottil from his position as vice-rector and dean of studies because of erroneous teaching on the Eucharist and the priesthood.
- 1983—Sister of Mercy Agnes Mary Mansour was ordered by the Archbishop of Detroit—strongly backed by the apostolic delegate in Washington—to leave her job as director of the Michigan Department of Social Services, where she was administering the federal Medicaid program which paid for abortions. She rejected the archbishop’s authority in the matter and left the Sisters of Mercy instead.
- 1984—The CDF in May ordered the lifting of the *Imprimatur* by Seattle Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen from the book *Sexual Morality*, by Father Philip S. Keane, S.S., published in 1977 by the Paulist Press.
- 1984—The CDF ordered Archbishop Peter Gerety of Newark, New Jersey to remove his *Imprimatur* from the best-selling adult educational text, *Christ Among Us* (Paulist Press).
- 1985—Because of his doctrinal deviations, Franciscan Father Leonardo Boff, a so-called “liberation theologian,” was ordered to remain silent for a full year in order to rethink his positions. Later, in 1991, he was again removed as a professor at a Catholic institute, as well as from the editorship of a Catholic magazine. In 1993, he finally abandoned the priesthood and married—automatically incurring excommunication—and left the Church.
- 1986—Father John McNeil, S.J., was informed in October by the CDF that he must either abandon the “pastoral ministry” he was conducting with homosexuals or be expelled from the Jesuit order. He chose not to give up his so-called “ministry,” and eventually had to be expelled from the Society of Jesus. Earlier (1977), as we have already noted above, he had been silenced on account of his book *The Church and the Homosexual*. (Through the years, it is important to note, the CDF, presciently, has been particularly adamant against any signs of moral tolerance of homosexual acts.)
- 1986—In July, after a long and involved investigation of more than the seven “biblical” years, the CDF finally reached the decision that Father Charles E. Curran of the Catholic University of America was no longer “suitable nor eligible to exercise the function of a professor of Catholic theology.” He had failed to “retract positions which violate the conditions necessary for a professor to be called a

Catholic theologian.” Father Curran, of course, had been the principal American leader of the massive theological dissent against Pope Paul VI’s 1968 “anti-birth-control” encyclical *Humanae Vitae* in 1968. He was dismissed from his tenured Catholic University theology faculty post by the Archbishop of Washington, James A. Hickey, in January 1987, acting “according to statute.” Father Curran promptly sued the university in a civil court to regain his position, but failed to win his case. He now teaches moral theology in a non-Catholic university.

- 1986—In October, Bishop Thaddeus A. Shubsda of Monterey, California, censured the book *New Hope for Divorced Catholics* (Harper & Row) by Father Barry Brunzman and ordered the priest out of the diocese.
- 1986—The CDF in November ordered Bishop Matthew Clark of Rochester, New York, to remove his *Imprimatur* from the sex education text *Parents Talk Love: The Catholic Handbook about Sexuality* by Father Matthew Kawiak and Susan K. Sullivan (Paulist Press).
- 1986—Bishop Louis Gelineau of Providence, Rhode Island, excommunicated long-time Planned Parenthood and pro-abortion apologist Mary Ann Sorrentino; she was the first American pro-abortion activist to be excommunicated by the Church.
- 1988—Jesuit Father Aloysius Bermejo was relieved of his teaching post at the Pontifical University in Poona, India, for his serious errors concerning the nature of papal infallibility and the infallibility of ecumenical councils.
- 1988—French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre and his fellow priests, Bernard Fellay, Bernard Tissier de Mallerais, Richard Williamson, and Alfonso de Galarreta—whom Archbishop Lefebvre ordained to be bishops—were excommunicated (see Appendix VI).
- 1988—In December, Dominican Father Matthew Fox was ordered silenced on a number of grounds and forbidden to “teach, preach, or lecture”; he championed a mishmash of New Age views incompatible with Catholic orthodoxy. Following extensive public wrangling with both the CDF and with his own religious order, he was eventually expelled from the Order of Preachers. He later left the Catholic Church entirely to join the Episcopal Church.
- 1989—In September, two Brazilian seminaries, Recife Theological Institute (Iter) and the Northeast II Seminary (Serene) were ordered closed by the Vatican Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes for failing to train priests in accordance with authentic Church teachings and directives.
- 1990—Bishop René H. Gracida of Corpus Christi, Texas, excommunicated Rachel Vargas, director of an abortion clinic, for “her cooperation

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in procuring abortions [which is] a sin against God and humanity and the laws of the Roman Catholic Church.”

- 1992—German Catholic theologian Eugen Drewermann, who questioned whether Jesus was truly born of a virgin or truly rose from the dead, had his priestly faculties removed by the Archbishop of Paderborn. Previously, he had been removed as a lecturer at a Catholic institute, but eventually he had to be removed from the priesthood entirely.
- 1992—The CDF censured the book of the late Canadian dissenting priest, Father André Guindon, entitled *The Sexual Creators: An Ethical Proposal for Concerned Christians*; the book justified homosexual practices.
- 1992—In May, Bishop John T. Steinbock of Fresno, California, censured the book *Coming Out Within: Stages of Spiritual Awakening for Lesbians and Gay Men* (HarperCollins) written by Father Craig O’Neil and Kathleen Ritter.
- 1993—Mexican Bishop Samuel Ruiz Garcia of San Cristobal de las Casas was forcefully criticized by the Holy See for his advocacy of Marxist-tinged “liberation theology.”
- 1995—Bishop Jacques Gaillot of Evreux, France, was removed from his bishopric by the Holy Father after having publicly—and even scandalously—taken public positions contrary to established Church teachings. Ostensibly, he was acting in favor of society’s “marginalized.” Popular demonstrations in his favor failed, however, to affect Rome’s determination that he had to go.
- 1996—The U.S. Catholic bishops’ Secretariat for Doctrine and Pastoral Practices issued a general critical review of the third edition of Notre Dame theologian Father Richard McBrien’s book *Catholicism*. Father McBrien had failed to make corrections earlier identified by the bishops’ Secretariat. *Catholicism* was declared to be “bewildering and unsettling for Catholics taking undergraduate courses in theology. . . . For some readers it will give encouragement to dissent: very little weight is given to the teaching of the Magisterium.”
- 1997—Father Tissa Balasuriya, O.M.I., was excommunicated by order of the CDF for persisting in holding and promoting views that seriously deviated from Catholic truth, including denial of Original Sin among other doctrines. He persisted in his false views even after having been admonished by his religious order and by the Sri Lankan bishops’ conference. The CDF judgment concerning him was later rescinded after Father Balasuriya again made a solemn profession of faith and signed a reconciliation statement.

- 1997—In September, the CDF ordered Bishop Peter Smith of East Anglia in England to withdraw his *Imprimatur* from the religious textbook *Roman Catholic Christianity*, which was being used in the Catholic schools.
- 1997—Concerns of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples led to the censure of three Korean theologians, Fathers John Sye Kong-seok, Paul Cheong Yang-moo, and Edward Ri Je-min for “recently published books, articles, and speeches that contain elements not in conformity with Catholic doctrine.”
- 1997—Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger issued a warning to the Society of Saint Paul whose flagship magazine in Italy, *Famiglia Cristiana*, had published an article the year before suggesting that parents should not “force” their convictions on a “gay” child.
- 1998—The CDF ordered the withdrawal of an *Imprimatur* granted by the U.S. bishops in 1995 to *The Liturgical Psalter*, which translated the psalms using so-called “inclusive language.” In July, the Holy See forced the Committee on Marriage and the Family of the U.S. bishops’ conference to “make corrections” in its draft document, “Always Our Children,” which was directed to the parents of homosexuals but which did not fully reflect the moral teaching of the Church on the subject. In September, pressure from Rome obliged Bishop Matthew Clark of Rochester, New York, to remove Father James Callen as pastor of Corpus Christi parish for such activities as giving Holy Communion to non-Catholics, blessing same-sex unions, and supporting women’s ordination. Father Callen took many parishioners with him when he left the Church to form his own “independent Catholic parish.”
- 1998—The CDF issued a Notification warning against the books on spirituality written by the Indian Jesuit priest, Father Anthony de Mello, who had died in 1987. His books were described as evidencing “a progressive distancing for the essential contents of the Christian faith.”
- 1998—Pope John Paul II accepted the resignation of Cardinal Hans Hermann Groër, the Archbishop of Vienna, guilty of child molestation. At a certain point all the Austrian bishops agreed that accusations made against the cardinal were unfortunately true and hence they publicly called upon him to step down. He relinquished all of his rights and privileges as a bishop and cardinal in resigning, including the right to vote in a papal conclave.
- 2000—Bishop Joseph J. Gerry of Portland, Maine, suspended Father John Harris for running an Internet news service for homosexual priests.
- 2000—The CDF ordered the book *Women at the Altar* (Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota) removed from circulation for promoting

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contraception and women's ordination; as a result, the book's author, Sister Lavinia Byrne, resigned from her religious order.

- 2000—Rome issued a sixteen-point censure in a CDF Notification concerning Father Reinhard Messner, professor of liturgical science at the University of Innsbruck.
- 2001—The Australian priest, Father Paul Collins, MSC, resigned from the priesthood after the theological errors in the book he had published were pointed out.
- 2001—Three books by Spanish Redemptorist priest Marciano Vidal were condemned in a May CDF Notification because the author obstinately claimed that both artificial birth control and sterilization could be morally acceptable in situations of “particular gravity.”
- 2002—Benedictine Father Willigis Jager and Franciscan Father Josef Imbach were censured by Rome in March, 2002, for their theological opinions.
- 2002—In August, Bishop Romulo Antonio Braschi was excommunicated for attempting to confer priestly ordination on seven women—who also suffered excommunication for the serious offenses they committed in cooperating with the bishop's effort.
- 2005—In February, Father Roger Haight, S.J., was ordered barred from teaching Catholic theology by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith because of the errors in his 1999 book, *Jesus: Symbol of God*, in which he challenged such Church teachings as the divinity of Christ, the truth of the Trinity, the salvific nature of Christ's death, his Resurrection, and the universality of his redemptive act.
- 2005—Following the election of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger as Pope Benedict XVI, Father Thomas Reese, S.J., on May 6, submitted his resignation as editor of the Jesuit magazine *America*, reportedly as a result of steady pressure from Cardinal Ratzinger and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith exerted prior to the election of the cardinal as the new pope. Although it is a publication of an established Catholic religious order, the Society of Jesus, *America* magazine was with increasing regularity under Father Reese printing articles favoring positions at variance with Catholic teaching, supposedly in the interests of presenting “all sides.”

These cases represent only some of the efforts Church authority has been making over recent years to try to restore discipline in an era when dissent and disobedience have unfortunately become all too widespread. It certainly cannot be said that Church authority has not acted. Other cases could be cited. It should also be noted, though, that many if not

most of the cases noted here were cases pressed by the Holy See. It is sadly true that, in the post-conciliar period, some territorial bishops have too readily let dissent and disobedience slide and thus have tacitly allowed these things to continue in too many cases. This has too often been the norm, in fact—*unless* Rome happened to intervene, which occurred from time to time.

Action by Rome alone, though, has not sufficed to meet the needs of the Church and the faith. There have even been cases, in fact, when Rome *attempted* to intervene, yet local bishops *declined* to cooperate, and, indeed, in some cases, even hampered Rome's efforts. A rather well-known case here was the strong defense by the Dutch bishops of the very questionable theology of Father Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P., when the latter was again called on the carpet by the CDF in 1986 (after he had already been investigated by the CDF in the late 1970s, as we noted in our original answer above). Other similar cases included the matter concerning the Peruvian "liberation theologian," Father Gustavo Gutierrez. In 1983 the CDF sent a list of ten questions about the work of Father Gutierrez to the Peruvian bishops; the latter, however, declined to entertain any criticism, let alone any condemnation, of the work of this "father of liberation theology." The Peruvian' bishops even entered into fractious quarrels on his account with the Holy See.

Brazilian bishops, and even cardinals, had similarly defended Father Leonardo Boff, even though the latter finally was disciplined, as noted above. Only when the Communist system finally collapsed in 1989 did it become apparent how far removed from reality were the assumptions of liberation theology. Yet Church authorities, too often, accepted these assumptions at face value.

The same thing was true of the case of Father Charles E. Curran. It took seven full years from the time the CDF first notified him that his works were under investigation before a final—and inevitable—judgment was rendered against him by the CDF. It was a full eighteen years between the time of Father Curran's sensational public dissent from Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae Vitae* in 1968, and the Church's decision that he was neither suitable nor eligible to exercise the function of a professor of Catholic theology. In the meantime, Father Curran was defended not only by officials of the Catholic University of America, but by the Catholic Theological Society of America, as well as by other professional associations. Even some American bishops defended him. Eminent moral

theologians such as Father Bernard Häring, C.S.S.R., a one-time teacher of Father Curran (and also, himself, a dissenter), quickly rallied to Curran's cause, as if it were the most natural thing in the world that professors of Catholic moral theology should be public dissenters from well-known teachings of the Church.

Yet another cause, notorious at the time in the United States, was that of the four priests, 24 nuns, and 69 laity who placed a paid advertisement in the *New York Times* in October 1984, claiming that "a diversity of opinion regarding abortion exists among committed Catholics." The Holy See worked for years, with considerable disedifying public fallout, to get at least the priests and sisters responsible for this incredible ad either to retract or face dismissal. Little by little, most of the signatories reached some form of accommodation with the Church—except for two Sisters of Notre Dame, Barbara Ferraro and Patricia Hussey, who more or less fought the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life to a draw before finally withdrawing from the religious life in 1988. Along the way, it was surprising how little cooperation and support the Holy See ever got from the local bishops and the religious orders of the people involved.

Incidents such as these certainly point to the *difficulties* encountered by Church authority when attempting to apply corrective action or restore discipline. When local Church authority, such as the responsible territorial bishop or perhaps a religious order, fail to cooperate with the efforts of the Holy See to impose discipline, it is perhaps not surprising that the efforts of the Church sometimes fail.

As Cardinal Franjo Seper, who was the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in the pontificate of Pope Paul VI, once remarked, probably in frustration:

The bishops, who obtained many powers for themselves at the Council, are often to blame because in this crisis they are not exercising their powers as they should. Rome is too far away to cope with every scandal—and Rome is not well obeyed. If all the bishops would deal decisively with these aberrations as they occur, the situation would be different. It is very difficult for us in Rome if we get no cooperation from the bishops.²⁹

29 In *Origins* (NC Documentary Service: May 4, 1972).

The truth of Cardinal Seper's judgment became only too blindingly clear in January 2002, when the first revelations of the clerical sex abuse scandals in the Catholic Church in the United States became known and then widely publicized, showing the Church in the worst possible light. There was no way that the immoral actions of the priest-abusers who were exposed should ever have been justified or tolerated. What perhaps has been too charitably characterized as the bishops' "benign neglect" of the Church's defense of her authentic discipline and doctrine had thus proved to be a disastrous policy for the Church. It was time, instead, for truth. We can only hope that the very painful lessons of 2002, especially those following the revelations of the clerical sex abuse scandals, have now in fact been learned; and that the Church's authentic teaching and proper discipline will henceforth be understood and upheld.

What needs to be added is that, in acting in such a minimalist fashion where Church moral teaching and good order were concerned, the bishops were certainly not acting in accord with Vatican II. On the contrary, the Council made very plain that bishops "have the *obligation* of fostering and safeguarding the unity of the faith and of safeguarding the discipline which is common to the whole Church . . . and with watchfulness . . . ward[ing] off whatever errors threaten the flock."³⁰

30 Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, nos. 23, 25. (Emphasis added).

Question 20

Everything you have said would be more plausible if it had not been shown that Vatican II contradicted the constant teachings of the Church in its Declaration on Religious Freedom. What about that?

We have already shown (Question 2) that the decisions of a general council of the Church, when ratified by a sovereign pontiff, are both protected from error as regards their doctrinal teaching and binding upon the faithful as regards their discipline. The Church recognizes no such thing as a “pastoral council” which might in some undefined way be “optional” for Catholics to follow or not to follow. A general council of the Church, in other words, would itself be the judge (subject to the final decision of the pope) of what it would have to hold or teach in order to be consistent with previous Church teaching, whether ordinary or extraordinary.

To assert that a general council of the Church *could* contradict “the constant teaching of the Church” would really be to set oneself up as the judge of the Catholic Tradition and to forget what the Holy Office decided back in 1949, as we have already quoted (Question 6): “The Savior did not leave it to private judgment to explain what is contained in the deposit of faith, but to the doctrinal authority of the Church.”¹ Short of a solemn definition of dogma, no teaching must presumably be accorded greater weight than that of a general council duly ratified by a pope. Pope Paul VI confirmed that the teaching of the Second Vatican Council possessed at least “the authority of the supreme ordinary Magisterium.”² And the First Vatican Council taught that not only are solemn dogmatic definitions to be believed with “divine and Catholic faith” but also those things proposed by the Church “through her *ordinary* and universal teaching office” (emphasis added),³ including, surely, those things decided by a general Church council, whether or not “dogmatically.” It follows that the teachings of Vatican II are binding on the faithful.

1 Letter of the Holy Office to the Archbishop of Boston (1949), in Neuner and Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, pp. 235-237.

2 Pope Paul VI, General Audience (January 12, 1966).

3 First Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith *Dei Filius*, in Neuner and Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, p. 45. (Emphasis added).

Nor is it possible for those who dislike this conclusion to take refuge in the fact that Vatican II's teaching on religious freedom comes in a "mere" declaration of the Council instead of in a dogmatic constitution. The "Tridentine" Profession of Faith issued by Pope Pius IV in 1564 requires acceptance and assent to everything "transmitted, defined, and declared" by an ecumenical council of the Church,⁴ not just to those things solemnly defined. How it could be imagined that this Tridentine teaching would not apply also to a declaration of Vatican Council II is not at all clear. It simply cannot be shown that Vatican II is any less a general council of the Church than the other general councils which preceded it. However, we must look at the specific instance where Vatican II is most often said—*per impossibile*—to have taught contrary to the Church's earlier doctrinal teachings, that is, with regard to religious freedom.

First of all, we need to be clear on what Vatican II taught. Having ascertained this, we can then compare it with previous Church teachings on the same subject, especially those of Pope Pius IX and Leo XIII. Although we shall have to follow a somewhat winding road, we will eventually be able to satisfy ourselves that there is no real opposition between the Church of today and the Church of yesterday.

Vatican II, then, taught as follows:

The Vatican Council declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom. Freedom of this kind means that all men should be immune from coercion on the part of individuals, social groups, and every human power so that, within due limits, nobody is forced to act against his convictions in religious matters in private or in public, alone or in associations with others. The Council further declares that the right to religious freedom is based on the very dignity of the human person as known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself. This right of the human person to religious freedom must be given such recognition in the constitutional order of society as will make it a civil right.

It is through his conscience that man sees and recognizes the demands of the divine law. He is bound to

⁴ Pope Pius IV, Profession of Faith, Bull *Injunctum Nobis* (1564), in *The Christian Faith*, pp. 21-24. (Emphasis added).

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follow this conscience faithfully in all his activity so that he may come to God, who is his last end. Therefore he must not be forced to act contrary to his conscience. Nor must he be prevented from acting according to his conscience, especially in religious matters. The reason is because the practice of religion of its very nature consist primarily of those voluntary and free internal acts by which a man directs himself to God. Acts of this kind cannot be commanded or forbidden by any merely human authority.

The freedom or immunity from coercion in religious matters which is the right of individuals must also be accorded to men when they act in community. Religious communities are a requirement of the nature of man and of religion itself.

Therefore, provided the just requirements of public order are not violated, these groups have a right to immunity so that they may organize themselves according to their own principles. ⁵

Thus, according to the Council, human beings possess a right to religious freedom; they may not be forced to act against their beliefs nor may they be prevented—within the limits of public order—from acting on their conscientious religious beliefs. Moreover, this right extends to a group or groups of persons, not just to individuals. In practice, this would mean that churches and religious communities other than the true Church of Christ, the Catholic Church, should be accorded recognition, tolerance, and protection by the state, and, indeed, even by the Church herself.

It is this corollary of Vatican II's teaching on religious freedom that some believe contradicts earlier Church teachings. For if churches other than the true Church have rights to recognition, toleration, and protection, would this not be tantamount to recognizing that "error has rights"? However, it seems quite clear from traditional Church teachings that error does not and cannot have "rights."

Pope Gregory XVI, for instance, in his encyclical *Mirari Vos*, in 1832, condemned what he called "the absurd and wrong view, or rather insanity, according to which freedom of conscience must be asserted and

⁵ Vatican Council II, Declaration on Religious Liberty *Dignitatis Humanae*, nos. 2-4.

vindicated for everybody.”⁶ Pope Pius IX, in his encyclical *Qui Pluribus* in 1846, similarly included among errors against the Catholic faith that “there is no difference between religions” or that “men can attain to eternal salvation by the practice of any religion whatever.”⁷ The same Pius IX issued still another encyclical in 1864, *Quanta Cura*, to which was attached his famous “Syllabus of Errors.” This was a list of the principal errors of the time which had in various ways been touched upon and censured by Pius IX in various of his allocutions, encyclicals, and other documents. The Pope decided to have drawn up a compact list of the various opinions which he had in one degree or another condemned or censured to accompany the encyclical *Quanta Cura* for the easy reference of the bishops receiving that encyclical.

The “Syllabus of Errors” caused a sensation in its day and is still used to try to convict the Church of authoritarianism, illiberality, or of whatever other crime some wish to convict the Church. However, a defense can be made that the condemned or censured propositions contained in the Syllabus all richly deserved to be censured or condemned, particularly when the context of most of these propositions is taken into account.

The Church in Pius IX’s day was mainly trying to defend herself against the aggressive new secularized and radical states which were seeking to eliminate the Church’s authority and influence over society with regard to such things as morality, religious discipline, education, the marriage bond, and so on. In many instances, civil governments did not hesitate to confiscate the Church’s lands and property, close her schools, and legislate to the effect that the children of the Church were no longer subject to her discipline. Understandably, Pius IX reacted to such proceedings, and often, censure was the only weapon he possessed.

Specifically, on our present subject of religious liberty, some of the propositions condemned by him in the Syllabus of Errors included:

Every man is free to embrace and profess that religion which, guided by the light of reason, he shall consider true. (no. 15)

In the present day it is no longer expedient that the Catholic

6 Pope Gregory XVI, encyclical *Mirari Vos* (1832), in Neuner and Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, p. 267.

7 Pope Pius IX, encyclical *Qui Pluribus* (1846), in *The Christian Faith*.

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religion should be held as the only religion of the state, to the exclusion of all other forms of worship. (no. 77)

Hence it has been wisely decided by law, in some Catholic countries, that persons coming to reside therein shall enjoy the public exercise of their own peculiar worship. (no. 78)⁸

If such propositions as these were condemned by Pope Pius IX, how could Vatican II nevertheless teach that men have a right to religious freedom, or that non-Catholics have a civil right (which the state must respect) to profess and practice their own religion, individually, or collectively as non-Catholic churches?

Some who have asked these questions have pointed out that Pope Leo XIII also delivered a number of *dicta* which seem to support the apparent Catholic teaching to be inferred from the Syllabus. Some of Leo XIII's teachings may further seem to call into question the teaching of Vatican II. For example, in his encyclical *Libertas Praestantissimum* issued in 1888, Leo XIII taught that of all men's obligations the "chiefest and holiest" is his duty to "worship God with devotion and piety." He specifically pointed out that:

. . . if considered in relation to the state, clearly implies that there is no reason why the state should offer any homage to God, or should desire any public recognition of Him; that no one form of worship is to be preferred to another, but that all stand on an equal footing, no account being taken of the religion of the people, even if they profess the Catholic faith. But, to justify this, it must be taken as true that the state has no duties toward God, or that such duties, if they exist, can be abandoned with impunity, both of which assertions are manifestly false.⁹

8 Pope Pius IX, encyclical *Quanta Cura* (and attached Syllabus of Errors) in Anne Fremantle, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals in Their Historical Context* (NY: Mentor Books, The New American Library, 1956), pp. 135-154.

9 Pope Leo XIII, encyclical *Libertas Praestantissimum* (June 20, 1888), in Etienne Gilson, ed., *The Church Speaks to the Modern World: The Social Teachings of Leo XIII* (Garden City, NY: Image Books, Doubleday and Company, 1954), pp. 56-85.

In his encyclical *Immortale Dei*, issued on November 1, 1885, Pope Leo XIII taught even more emphatically:

To hold that there is no difference in matters of religion between forms that are unlike each other, and even contrary to each other, most clearly leads in the end to the rejection of all religion in both theory and practice. And this is the same thing as atheism, however it may differ from it in name. Men who really believe in the existence of God must, in order to be consistent with themselves and to avoid absurd conclusions, understand that differing modes of divine worship involving dissimilarity and conflict even on most important points cannot all be equally probable, equally good, and equally acceptable to God.¹⁰

These teachings from great nineteenth-century popes all add up to the proposition that religious indifferentism on the part of individuals has been definitively condemned by the Church—which has also taught with equal definitiveness that the state has an obligation to favor and protect the true religion, unlike other religions which cannot claim the fullness of truth which is to be found only in the Catholic Church.

When Vatican II came along and taught that freedom to profess and practice any religion is a civil right for both individuals and individuals gathered into their own churches, it seemed to some, in the light of what had been taught earlier, to be a clear case of the Church contradicting herself.

How can we surmount this apparent contradiction?

In the first place, we should carefully notice that nowhere in its formulation of the basic principles of religious freedom—either as summarily quoted above or as explained at length in the *Declaration on Religious Freedom*—does Vatican II actually take issue with the truths declared by the earlier popes. The Council simply proceeds to formulate and explain its own teaching on religious freedom. The Council thus does not in any way assert or suggest that “error has rights.” It only declares,

¹⁰ Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei* (November 1, 1885), in *The Church Speaks to the Modern World*, pp. 161-187.

what is in any case indisputable and entirely traditional in Church teaching, that *persons* have rights, “based on the very dignity of the human person as known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself.”¹¹

It was not the specific intent of the Council to examine in depth the question of truth or error in religion. The *Declaration* reaffirms the belief of the Church that the “one true religion continues to exist in the Catholic and Apostolic Church” and says that “all men are *bound* to seek the truth, especially in what concerns God and his Church, and to embrace it and hold on to it as they come to know it.”¹² The *Declaration* accepts, in other words, the teachings we have quoted above from the great popes of the nineteenth century. But the subject of this particular *Declaration* is different; it is talking about something other than what Pius IX and Leo XIII were talking about.

The key to solution of the apparent conflict between Vatican II's Declaration on Religious Liberty *Dignitatis Humanae* and Pope Pius IX and Leo XIII on religious freedom lies in our realization that the Council and the nineteenth-century Popes, are *addressing themselves to different questions*. It is therefore not surprising, nor is it a contradiction in true sense, that they come up with different answers. The Council is looking at the question of religious freedom from a totally different perspective than the one from which the nineteenth-century popes looked at it.

These popes were addressing themselves to naturalistic philosophies which held that men did not have any obligation to worship the true God. Gregory XVI rightly styled this idea an “insanity.” The philosophies which claim to vindicate it are manifestly false, then and now. What the other popes said then on the same subject, samples of which we have quoted above, was true then, and remains true now.

Similarly, with regard to questions of the relationship between Church and state, the nineteenth-century popes were addressing themselves to a situation in which secularizing governments, ruling in some cases over predominantly Catholic populations, were nevertheless determined to set at naught both the beliefs of their Catholic peoples, the rights and responsibilities of the Church towards those same Catholic peoples, and the responsibilities of the state towards the true religion.

11 Second Vatican Council, Declaration on Religious Liberty *Dignitatis Humanae* (December 7, 1965), chapter I, no. 2. Available online at <http://www.ewtn.com/library/councils/v2relfre.htm>.

12 “Declaration on Religious Freedom,” no. 1. (Emphasis added).

Much of what Popes Pius IX and Leo XIII taught in this regard was done to try and stem the tide of secularization by reminding the governments (especially of Catholic countries) of their responsibilities to their own peoples and to the Church—responsibilities which their predecessor governments in these same countries had recognized, at least in theory, and in some cases for centuries. The new secularizing governments, with which the popes were trying to cope, were repudiating duties which Christian states had more or less recognized since the time of the Emperor Constantine. The *purpose* of all the papal teachings quoted above was thus to defend the role of the Church and religion in a Christian commonwealth.

When Pius IX condemned the proposition that it was no longer expedient that the Catholic religion should be held as the only religion of the state, this was no doubt a valiant attempt on his part to recall the governments of Catholic countries to their plain duty. Today, however, scarcely a government exists in the world that would recognize any such duty to Catholics or to the Church. This fact does not make Pius IX's teaching any less true, but it does mean that there is no longer any situation in the world to which Pius' particular teaching *applies*.

Similarly, when Leo XIII taught that indifferentism in religion would inevitably lead to atheism, he not only taught truly, he was quite a prophet as well! Indifferentism has indeed spread everywhere in spite of all of his and of the Church's strenuous efforts, and it has indeed led to atheism practically everywhere, just as he had prophesied that it would!

So there is nothing at all wrong with Leo XIII's teaching; it is as true as ever. It even applies to individuals today with the same force as it ever did. Once again, however, it does not apply to the conditions of today as far as the state is concerned. It may be "manifestly false" as doctrine—as it certainly is—that the "state has no duties towards God"; but unless the state itself is willing to recognize those duties, the Church is unable to compel the state to do so. This is, roughly speaking, the situation the Church is faced with throughout the whole world today. Not even in Ireland, Portugal, or Spain does there exist any government which any longer seriously heeds the Church's insistence that the state has a duty to uphold true morality and true religion.

Spain, indeed, adopted a new constitution by a referendum as recently as December 1978. This new constitution stipulated that "there shall be

no state religion.” The former Spanish constitution, which reflected the traditional reality, said that “the profession and practice of the Catholic religion, which is the religion of the Spanish state, shall enjoy official support.” But the situation has changed, not the principle. A new concordat, which Spain signed with the Vatican in January 1979, officially reflects the new state of affairs, namely, that Catholicism is no longer officially recognized by the Spanish government as the established religion of Spain.¹³

And it was to this new state of affairs that has been developing over the past century that Vatican II was principally addressing itself. The Council in no way intended to deny or oppose the earlier teachings. It was simply constrained to recognize that we can only have Christian commonwealths or Christian states where we first have *Christians* in sufficient numbers and with sufficient political influence—a situation that not only did not exist in any of the frankly atheistic or Communist states of the East—including Pope John Paul II’s native Poland—but does not even obtain in any major Western country today, since the Western countries are given over to secular humanism every bit as much as the Eastern countries were formerly given over to Communism. Secularism at best, and Communism at worst, have nearly everywhere triumphed for the moment, and it was to this new situation that the Second Vatican Council had to address itself. The Church still has to carry on *her* divine mission even though formerly Christian states may now have abandoned Christianity.

In adapting to this new situation, the Council was expressly responding to the task assigned to it when it was convoked by Pope John XXIII, who had said in his Opening Speech to the Council that “while the Church should never depart from the sacred patrimony of truth received from the Fathers . . . at the same time she must ever look to the present, to the new conditions and new forms of life introduced into the modern world which have opened new avenues to the Catholic apostolate.” This was precisely what the Council was doing in its teaching on religious liberty.

The Council’s teaching that “the freedom or immunity from coercion in religious matters which is the right of individuals must also be accorded to men when they act in community” applies, first of all, to Catholics and the Catholic Church herself! For the secularized state of today, again

¹³ See Edward Maron, “A Friendly Separation of Church and State in Spain,” in *Our Sunday Visitor* magazine (May 20, 1979).

nearly everywhere throughout the world, is much more likely to ignore and belittle the Church's teaching, and trample upon her rights and those of its own Catholic citizens, than ever to uphold the things that Popes Pius IX and Leo XIII correctly taught the state as an obligation of the state. But the states of today do not recognize this obligation, or else they have jettisoned it if they ever did, and we are now faced with a situation which resembles that of the early Church—before the Emperor Constantine recognized Christianity as the religion of the state. Surely no one would hold that the teachings of Pius IX or Leo XIII were ever meant to apply under the rule of, for example, the Roman Emperors Nero or Domitian! We are back in such a pagan situation today. Legalized abortion and divorce—symbolic of the new pagan world in which we now live—have even come to Italy.

Vatican II's teaching on religious freedom has thus actually come providentially and prophetically in this new day of pagan tyrannies practiced by secular states.

The doctrine that no man may be coerced in the matter of his religious beliefs, or prevented from acting upon them, is an eminently traditional doctrine, viewed from the angle from which the Council considered the matter. The Second General Council of Nicaea back in 787, the seventh general council of the Church, was surely recognizing precisely this same principle when it legislated in one of its canons about Jews pretending to be Christians, but secretly keeping the Sabbath and other purely Jewish observances: "Such people must not be received into the communion, nor in prayer, nor in the Church," the Second Council of Nicaea declared. "*But let them be Hebrews openly, according to their own religion.*"¹⁴ In other words, the *rights* of Jews, as human persons, to worship according to their consciences, and to act according to their consciences in religious matters—and even to have their own synagogues publicly recognized, tolerated, and protected by the Christian emperor—all these rights of Jews were clearly affirmed even by this early Council of the Church.

Vatican II has thus done no more than to formulate and spell out this same right of persons to religious freedom that has always been there and which the Church in her official teaching has consistently recognized to be there.

¹⁴ See the text of Canon 8 from the Second General Council of Nicaea in Neuner and Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, p. 262. (Emphasis added).

Saint Thomas Aquinas held in the *Summa Theologica* that “among the infidels there are some who have never accepted the Christian faith, such as Gentiles and Jews; and these should in no way be constrained to embrace the faith and profess belief. For belief depends upon the will.”¹⁵

In another article of the *Summa*, Saint Thomas taught the same principle as the Second Council of Nicaea, namely, that non-Catholic worship can be “openly” tolerated, “either on account of some good that ensues therefrom or because of some evil avoided. The Church has tolerated the rites even of heretics and pagans when unbelievers were very numerous.”¹⁶ Surely unbelievers have never been more numerous than they are today. Surely Vatican II was not out of line in wishing to bring out or emphasize those of the Church’s teachings which apply to the situation we have in the world today.

Pope Pius XII, in a remarkable address delivered to the Tenth International Congress of the Historic Sciences on September 7, 1955, explicitly recognized that the Church’s teaching on religious liberty and the obligations of the state towards the true religion are to some degree contingent upon whether or not the state is “Christian” or itself recognizes any particular obligations to the Church or to its Catholic citizens who profess the true Faith. Recognizing the truth of Leo XIII’s teaching that the state and the Church are independent powers but that they cannot, for all of that, ignore one another, Pope Pius XII pointed out that this teaching “reflect[ed] the consciousness of the Church” throughout most of her history. But he specifically excepted the first “few centuries” of that history when the teaching simply did not apply—as it similarly cannot entirely apply in the case of our new pagan states of today.¹⁷

Indeed, the election of the Polish Pope John Paul II underlined the real intent and significance of Vatican II’s Declaration on Religious Freedom. For Cardinal Wojtyla, as archbishop of Cracow, functioning as a bishop under a Communist government, had gratefully received the *Declaration* from the Council—and as Cardinal Archbishop he characteristically invoked this document precisely against the usurpations of the Communist government of Poland of the rights to worship of Catholics and the Church.

15 Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, second pt., pt. II, Q. 10, A. 8.

16 *Ibid.*, second pt., pt. II, Q. 10, A. 12.

17 See Pope Pius XII, *Allocution to the Tenth International Congress of Historical Sciences* (September 7, 1955), in O’Gorman, *The Church*, pp. 725 ff.

In the address, "The Eucharist and Man's Hunger for Freedom," which Cardinal Wojtyla delivered to the International Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia in 1976, the future pope declared:

In our times, on the background of the maturing social and human consciousness, the principle of the freedom of the human spirit, of the freedom of conscience, of the freedom of religion has become much more evident. The Second Vatican Council has expressed it in many places and especially in the separate *Declaration on Religious Freedom*. But is this principle really respected everywhere? Do we never meet with the case of those who are underprivileged because of their religious convictions? May we not even speak today of actual persecutions of those who confess their religion, especially Christians, persecuted as they were in the first centuries after Christ?

This is what the *Declaration of Religious Freedom* says on the subject: "Forms of government still exist under which, even though freedom of religious worship receives constitutional recognition, the powers of the government are engaged in the effort to deter citizens from professing religion and to make life difficult and dangerous for religious communities" (*Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 15).

And so today we bring to this great community of confessors of the Eucharistic Christ, gathered at the Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia, the whole hunger for freedom which permeates contemporary man and all humanity. In the name of Jesus Christ we have the right and the duty to demand true freedom for men and for peoples. We therefore bring this hunger for real freedom and deposit it on this altar. Not only a man, a priest, a bishop, but Christ himself is at this altar, he who through our ministration offers his unique and eternal sacrifice.¹⁸

18 Karol Cardinal Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II) to the Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia *The Eucharist and Man's Hunger for Freedom* (1976), in *L'Osservatore Romano* (English edition, November 18, 1976).

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The future Pope John Paul II saw that the issue of religious freedom primarily involves coercion by the State. After becoming pope, John Paul II went above and beyond the call of duty both to affirm the principles of the Vatican II Declaration and to express his support of the document itself. He went out of his way to do both in his encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* (no. 17). He did the same in an "Appeal for Religious Freedom" addressed to the Secretary General of the United Nations Organization on December 11, 1978, on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of that body's "Universal Declaration of Human Rights."¹⁹ The subject of religious freedom has been raised in other talks, homilies, or messages, which he has delivered. For example, John Paul II repeated the Council's definition of religious liberty when, in an address to Italian Catholic doctors delivered on December 28, 1978, he called for "respect, in legislation and in fact, of freedom of conscience, understood as the fundamental right of the person not to be forced to act contrary to his conscience or prevented from behaving in accordance with it."²⁰

Finally, John Paul II made Vatican II's teaching on religious freedom the keystone of his entire message during his dramatic visit to Poland in June of 1979. As the *New York Times* reported: "John Paul II touched an even deeper nerve, the legitimacy of state power, when he raised the question of normalization of relations between church and state in a speech before the Polish bishops. In specific Polish terms, he said, religious freedom does not mean simply freedom of worship, but *freedom for the church to take its total place in society.*"²¹

Not only is Vatican II's teaching on religious freedom compatible with past Church teachings; it has proved to be indispensable to the Church in enabling her to meet the challenge of striving to fulfill the mission confided to her by Christ in an age of Communist tyrannies. Those who believe Vatican II's *Declaration on Religious Freedom* is opposed to the teachings of Popes Pius IX and Leo XIII are failing to interpret what these popes taught in light of this constant Church teaching against coercion in matters of religious belief. It was Pius IX himself who taught that "it must be held as certain that those who are in ignorance of the true religion, if this ignorance is invincible, are

19 Message of Pope John Paul II to the United Nations on the 30th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in *Origins* (NC Documentary Service: December 21, 1978), vol. 8, no. 27, pp. 417-420.

20 Pope John Paul II, "Address to Italian Catholic Doctors (December 28, 1978), in *L'Osservatore Romano* (English edition, January 8, 1979).

21 As quoted in *The New York Times* (June 11, 1979). (Emphasis added).

not subject to any guilt in this matter before the eyes of the Lord” and that “only when we have been released from the bonds of this body and shall ‘see God as He is’ (1 Jn. 3:2) shall we understand how closely and wonderfully the divine mercy and justice are linked.”²²

Pope Leo XIII, in the encyclical *Immortale Dei* which some have held stands against Vatican II, taught that “the Church is also always very careful that nobody be forced to join the Catholic faith against his will, for, as Augustine wisely admonishes, ‘only he who wills so can believe.’” Leo XIII did not believe that non-Catholic religions should have the *same* rights as the true religion, but he quite explicitly recognized, also in *Immortale Dei*, the right of persons to religious freedom, “for the sake of attaining a great good or of avoiding to cause evil,”²³ which Vatican II later spelled out.

Those who hold that Vatican II’s *Dignitatis Humanae* contradicts earlier Church teaching on the subject thus need to study both this Vatican II document and teachings of Popes Pius IX and Leo XIII more carefully and in their proper contexts. It is noteworthy to those interested in the continuity of Church teachings, that both *Immortale Dei* and *Libertas Praestantissimum* of Leo XIII are actually cited in the Vatican II documents as among the sources for Vatican II’s teaching on religious freedom. The Council incorporated into this document an impressive doctrinal synthesis of the best elements of the Church’s theological reflection across the centuries. It did so, moreover, having subjected the text of the *Declaration on Religious Liberty* to more revisions by the Fathers themselves than any other document of the Council. The sixth and final edition of the original schema was approved by a vote of 2038 to 70, and, when finally promulgated by Pope Paul VI, it was to the great applause of the Council Fathers.²⁴

The principal objection of the seventy Council Fathers who voted against the document, incidentally, was not against its message as a whole. According to Father Ralph Wiltgen’s lively account of the proceedings in *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber*, they wanted the criterion determining the limits of religious freedom to be the “common good” and not the “just requirements of the public order,” as specified in the *Declaration* (no.

22 Pope Pius IX, Allocution *Singulari Quodam* (1854), in Neuner and Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, p. 268.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 271.

24 Wiltgen, *The Rhine Flows Into the Tiber*, p. 252.

4). If this “correction” had been made, these Fathers too indicated their willingness to vote for the Declaration.²⁵ In any event, the correction was not made, perhaps because of the evident absurdity of imagining today’s modern secularistic or Communist states as *able* to make a judgment about “the common good” in the true Catholic understanding of that term—again, the intent of the *Declaration* was to reaffirm the rights of persons, not to spell out the duties of states.

Dignitatis Humanae, Vatican II’s Declaration on Religious Freedom, promulgated on December 7, 1965, is thus based on quite traditional doctrine concerning the inviolability of conscience, the freedom of the act of faith, and the demands of natural justice—all of which can be found, at least partially, elucidated in the writings of the Church’s great doctors such as Saint Thomas Aquinas, as we have already seen above. It is also, in fact, the very document in which the Council makes it unmistakably clear that conscience is not an absolute—the doctrine that Pope Gregory XVI and Pope Pius IX were really condemning—but rather that the traditional Catholic doctrine still obtains:

In forming their consciences the faithful must pay careful attention to the sacred and certain teaching of the Church. For the Catholic Church is by the will of Christ the teacher of truth. It is her duty to proclaim and teach with authority the truth which is Christ and, at the same time, to declare and confirm by her authority the principles of the moral order which spring from human nature itself.²⁶

No indifferentism here! Rather, this is a ringing reaffirmation of both the truth of the teaching of the Church and of the natural law—and of the obligation to form one’s conscience in accordance with them.

The Declaration on Religious Liberty further takes care to note that the core of its teaching concerning religious freedom, i.e., understanding religious freedom as “immunity from coercion in civil society” (no. 1), is but a fuller development of a teaching already found in the writings of earlier popes.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

²⁶ Vatican II, *Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 14.

Within the space of a couple of paragraphs in his great 1931 encyclical against Fascism in Italy, *Non Abbiamo Bisogno*, Pope Pius XI managed both to affirm the very right of persons to religious freedom later developed by Vatican II, and to condemn again the false idea of absolute liberty of a supposedly autonomous conscience—the idea rightly condemned by the nineteenth-century popes:

We state, venerable Brethren, the sacred and inviolable rights of the soul and of the Church, and this is the reflection and conclusion that more than any other concerns Us, as it is, than any other, more grave. Time and again, as is well known, We have expressed Our thoughts—or, better, the thoughts of the Holy Church—on these important and essential matters, and it is not to you, Venerable Brethren, faithful masters in Israel, that it is necessary to say more. But We must add something for the benefit of those dear people committed to your care and whom as shepherds of souls, you nourish and govern by divine mandate and who nowadays would almost never be able, save for you, to know the thoughts of the Common Father of souls. We said sacred and inviolable rights of souls and of the Church because the matter concerns the rights of souls to procure for themselves the greatest spiritual good according to the teaching and under the formation work of the Church, of such a teaching and of such an unique work that it is constituted by divine mandate in this supernatural order, established in the Blood of God the Redeemer, necessary and obligatory to all in order to participate in the divine Redemption. It concerns the right of souls so formed to bring the treasures of the Redemption to other souls, thus participating in the activities of the Apostolic Hierarchy.

And in consideration of this double right of souls, We are, as We stated above, happy and proud to wage the good fight for the liberty of consciences, though not indeed (as someone perhaps inadvertently, has quoted Us as saying) for the liberty of conscience which is an equivocal expression too often distorted to mean the

absolute independence of conscience, which is absurd in a soul created and redeemed by God.²⁷

Here Pius XI clearly distinguishes between the false idea of an absolute “liberty of conscience,” and the right and duty to worship God in accordance with the dictates of one’s conscience. There was, in other words, an explicit distinction drawn in Church teachings between these ideas long before Vatican II. Hardly any Catholic before Vatican II was heard to object to the following passage of Pope John XXIII’s famous 1963 encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, addressed to Catholics and to “all men of good will”: “Also among man’s rights is the right to be able to worship God in accordance with the right dictates of his own conscience, and to profess his religion *both in private and in public.*”²⁸

The great nineteenth-century pioneer of Catholic social teaching, Bishop Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler, would doubtless have looked upon Vatican II’s *Dignitatis Humanae* as but the logical fruition of his own insistence that, “The Church places so high a value on freedom of religion that she rejects as immoral and illegitimate any use of external force against those who are not her members.”²⁹ Bishop von Ketteler in the nineteenth century was not saying anything too different from what Saint Athanasius had already said in the fourth century when he remarked that “it is part of true godliness not to compel but to persuade.”³⁰ Vatican II recognized the same as the special task of the Church today, in a de-Christianized era. Our Lord Himself recognized our freedom to collaborate or not to collaborate in that task when He asked His disciples, “Will you also go away?” (Jn 6:67). We too are *free* to go on questioning the Council’s teachings or quibbling, but what is the point of doing so when there is so much to be done for Christ?

We may fittingly close this section by repeating Vatican II’s own affirmation that its teaching on religious liberty is simply a new and necessary way of looking at a radically changed world not, in any sense, a “new” doctrine:

27 Pope Pius XI, Encyclical *Non Abbatno Bisogno* (1931).

28 Pope John XXIII, Encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (1963), no. 14. (Emphasis added).

29 Bishop Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler, “Freedom, Authority, and the Church,” in *Social Justice Review* (June, 1976), p. 73.

30 Saint Athanasius, *History of the Arians*, no. 67. Available at <http://www.ecel.org/fathers2/NPNF2-04/>

The Pope, The Council, and The Mass

So while the religious freedom which men demand in fulfilling their obligation to worship God has to do with freedom from coercion in civil society, *it leaves intact the traditional teaching on the moral duty of individuals and societies towards the true religion and the one Church of Christ.*³¹

Guided by the Holy Spirit, the Second Vatican Council, like the prudent scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven, has truly resembled that householder “who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old” (Mt. 13:52).

31 Vatican II, *Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 1. (Emphasis added).

Question 21

But why didn't Vatican Council II condemn Communism?

The question would at first sight seem to have very little to do with the subject of this book, but, in the experience of the authors, no question is more frequently asked by Traditionalists. The fact that the Second Vatican Council did not explicitly condemn Communism seems to be an especially important reason in the minds of many to distrust the Council which also instituted the liturgical changes which have now become so familiar. Moreover, it is sometimes held that the Council was remiss in not condemning Communism even according to its own lights, since the Council aimed to deal with the contemporary problems, and what greater problem is there, especially for the Church, than Communism?¹

In reply it must be pointed out, first of all, that one rather obvious reason why Communism did not have to be singled out for explicit condemnation by a general council of the Catholic Church was that it had already been definitively condemned by the Church—in Pope Pius XI's encyclical *Divini Redemptoris*. Its condemnation in this encyclical has in no way been rescinded and still stands. The Council did not have to repeat an action that had already been taken by the Church. Vatican I similarly did not explicitly condemn Freemasonry in its day, since there was no doubt as to where the Church stood on Freemasonry. Not even the Council of Trent condemned a militant Islam in its day, although Islam posed a danger to the Church then perhaps even as great as the danger posed by Communism today. Lack of specific condemnation has never meant that the Church has relaxed her position on the evils she condemns; it only means that she can be concerned with more than one subject on different occasions.

It was both an aim of Pope John XXIII in convoking the Council and of the Council itself in its acts, to find a new and fresh approach to the problems of the day. It was hoped that the Church could be renewed in a way that would attract the millions of souls living without Christ in the secularistic, atheistic world of today (see Question 1). It was not believed that repeated condemnations of things already condemned

¹ This was certainly true at the time of the first edition of this book. Pope John Paul II, who firmly accepted Vatican II, had no small part in the downfall of Communism. Even though Communism is much less of a threat, this chapter has been unchanged. The answer to this question remains instructive.

would particularly assist in this renewal. Rather, it was hoped that the Church could be again projected in her true essence as being uniquely capable of fulfilling man's deepest longings, his desires for justice, peace, and happiness. The Council wanted to reemphasize the true essence of the Church as the upholder of all natural values and legitimate human aspirations. In a sense, the original program of the Council was the same program which Pope John Paul II announced as *his* program at the beginning of his pontificate:

The absolute and yet sweet and gentle power of the Lord responds to the whole depths of the human person, to his loftiest aspirations of intellect, will, and heart. It does not speak the language of force but expresses itself in charity and truth. . . .

Brothers and sisters, do not be afraid to welcome Christ and accept His power. . . . Be not be afraid. Open wide the doors for Christ. To His Saving power open the boundaries of states, economic and political systems, the vast fields of culture, civilization and development. Do not be afraid. Christ knows "what is in man." He alone knows it. . . .

The whole Church praying, meditating and acting in order that Christ's words of life may reach all people and be received by them as a message of hope, salvation and total liberation.²

The emphasis of Vatican II was intended to be positive—just as John Paul II saw his own pontificate in these terms, though he, of all possible popes, could scarcely have been imagined to be naïve about Communism or "soft" on it. For these reasons as well as others, a petition signed by 450 bishops to have Communism explicitly condemned by the Second Vatican Council was not acted upon by the Council.³ However, there could be no mistaking the *equivalent* condemnation of Communism in its contemporary ideological and political expression when the Council declared:

2 John Paul II, "Homily at the Mass Marking the Beginning of His Pastoral Ministry" (October 22, 1978).

3 Such as the rush to prepare the final text of the Pastoral Constitution on the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes* for promulgation, and the desire *not* to provoke further reprisals and persecution of already hard-pressed Catholics behind the Iron Curtain.

Question 21: Vatican Council II and Communism

Among the various kinds of present-day atheism, that one should not go unnoticed which looks for man's autonomy through his economic and social emancipation. It holds that religion, of its very nature, thwarts such emancipation by raising man's hopes in a future life, thus both deceiving him and discouraging him from working for a better form of life on earth. That is why those who hold such views, wherever they gain control of the state, violently attack religion, and in order to spread atheism, especially in the education of young people, make use of all means by which the civil authority can bring pressure to bear on its subjects.

The Church, as given over to the service of both God and man, cannot cease from reproving, with sorrow yet with the utmost firmness, as she had done in the past, those harmful teachings and ways of acting which are in conflict with reason and with common human experience, and which cast man down from the noble state to which he is born.⁴

It is clear from these paragraphs that the Council renounced none of the Church's principles but rather reaffirmed them. The footnote attached to the last paragraph refers specifically to documents containing the Church's repeated condemnations of atheistic Communism, especially to Pope Pius XI's 1937 encyclical *Divini Redemptoris* "On Atheistic Communism," which we have already referred to above, and which is acknowledged to be one of the most succinct and trenchant analyses of Communism ever written.

Moreover, if the Council did not condemn Communism explicitly by name, the pope *did*—and while the Council was still sitting. We refer to Pope Paul VI's very first encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*, issued in 1964, wherein the then Chief Shepherd of the Church declared to all the bishops of the Catholic world:

Sad to say, there is a vast circle comprising very many people who profess no religion at all. Many, too, subscribe to atheism in one of its many different forms. They parade

⁴ Vatican II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, nos. 20-21.

their godlessness openly, asserting its claims in education and politics, in the foolish and fatal belief that they are emancipating mankind from false and outworn notions about life and the world and substituting a view that is scientific and up-to-date.

This is the most serious problem of our time. We are firmly convinced that the basic propositions of atheism are utterly false and irreconcilable with underlying principles of thought. They strike at the genuine and effective foundation for man's acceptance of a rational order in the universe, and introduce into human life a futile kind of dogmatism which, far from solving life's difficulties, only degrades it and saddens it. Any social system based on these principles is doomed to utter destruction. Atheism, therefore, is not a liberating force, but a catastrophic one, for it seeks to quench the light of the living God. We shall therefore resist this growing evil with all our strength, spurred by our great zeal for safeguarding the truth, inspired by our social duty of loyally professing Christ and His gospel, and driven by a burning, unquenchable love, which makes man's good our constant concern. We shall resist in the invincible hope that modern man may recognize the religious ideals which the Catholic faith sets before him and feel himself drawn to seek a form of civilization which will never fail him, but will lead on to the natural and supernatural perfection of the human spirit. May the grace of God enable him to possess his temporal goods in peace and honor and to live in the assurance of acquiring those that are eternal.

It is for these reasons that We are driven to repudiate such ideologies as deny God and oppress the Church. *We repudiate them as Our predecessors did, and as everyone must do who firmly believes in the excellence and importance of religion. These ideologies are often identified with economic, social and political regimes; atheistic communism is a glaring instance of this.* Yet is it really so much we who condemn them? One might say

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that it is rather they and their politicians who are clearly repudiating us, and for doctrinaire reasons subjecting us to violent oppression. Truth to tell, the voice we raise against them is more the complaint of a victim than the sentence of a judge.⁵

In light of the foregoing, the claim that has sometimes been made that Vatican II's teaching somehow signified a *rejection* of the Church's well-known condemnations of Communism as an ideological and politico-cultural system founded on atheism can only be dismissed as a misrepresentation of the actual teaching of the Church and of the Council. There can be no change in the Church's attitude towards the errors of atheistic Marxism. However, in the spirit of true Christianity, the Council did remind Catholics of the supernatural virtue of charity which must motivate them in any struggle, even against the evil and perversities of Communism:

Love and courtesy should not, of course, make us indifferent to truth and goodness. Love, in fact, impels the followers of Christ to proclaim to all men the truth which saves. But we must distinguish between the error (which must always be rejected) and the person in error, who never loses his dignity as a person even though he flounders amid false or inadequate religious ideas. God alone is the judge and searcher of hearts: he forbids us to pass judgment on the inner guilt of others.

The teaching of Christ even demands that we forgive injury, and the precept of love, which is the commandment of the New Law, included all our enemies: "You have heard that it was said, "you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, love your enemies, do good to them that hate you; and pray for those who persecute and calumniate you" (Mt. 5:43-44).⁶

In a sense, as we suggested in the answer to Question 1, Vatican II was looking *beyond* the present worldwide threat posed by Communism.

5 Pope Paul VI, Encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964), nos. 99-100. (Emphasis added).

6 Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 28.

Vatican II looked to a more fundamental problem than Communism; it looked at the problem of *unbelief* which is one of the root causes that enables Communism and other evils to flourish without principled opposition. The Council's answer to this worldwide phenomenon of unbelief, indeed the very purpose for which the Council deliberated and issued its teachings, was to reorient the attitude of Catholics towards the need for *evangelization*—the preaching of the Gospel to our contemporary "faithless generation" (Mk. 9:19), the making of new Christians who will be the solid foundation for the new Christian society which can one day be built upon the ruins of the ones which the Communists, like the other secularizers of today, may say they are trying to build but will not finally succeed in building because "without Me you can do nothing" (Jn. 15:5).

In considering how we Catholics should regard Communists, then, even while we know from the Church's teaching that the Communist system is evil, let us recall the words of Father Werenfried van Straaten, O. Praem., founder of Aid to the Church in Need (formerly Iron Curtain Church Relief), who worked tirelessly for the persecuted Church behind the Iron Curtain for over thirty years and had no illusions about the Communist system. Yet Fr. Werenfried declared:

We are not advocates of a crusade against Communism. Christ was a lover of peace. He sat at table with sinners and did not refuse Judas' kiss. That is why Pope John considered it unchristian to refuse the handshake of a communist. Communists too, even though they are the servants of Satan, have a right to expect us to return evil with good. If they slap us in the face they may expect in virtue of the gospel that we should turn the other cheek. We owe them a Christian answer because they can only recover the God they have lost by the witness of authentic Christianity.⁷

This is the kind of "answer" the Church—and Catholics—should give to the threat of Communism or any similar evil.

⁷ Fr. Werenfried van Straaten, O. Praem., "Aid to the Church in Need: Annual Report for 1977," in *The Mirror*, (June 1978), no. 4, p. 11.

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Note to the Revised Edition: The collapse of Soviet Communism in 1989—which many serious commentators have soberly observed was greatly hastened by the election of a pope from Communist Poland in 1979!—certainly provided a note of vindication for the Council’s decision to look *beyond* the Communist threat of the day towards the needs of the Church in the Third Millennium of Christianity.

Question 22

Didn't a Pope, as well as a general council, once condemn the acts of another Pope, Pope Honorius I? Is it not at least possible that Pope Paul VI might someday be censured in a similar way for daring to change the Mass?

The thought process behind this question, asked with surprising frequency by Traditionalists, seems to be that, if a pope was once actually condemned by a subsequent pope, and by a general council of the Church as well, perhaps some day Pope John XXIII could be condemned for calling Vatican Council II or Pope Paul VI for carrying out the reforms decreed by the Council.

The question thus assumes that the two popes would deserve condemnation for calling the Council and carrying out its reforms. This is a pretty heady assumption. Indeed it is of interest in this connection that both Popes John Paul I and John Paul II immediately pledged at the beginning of their pontificates to continue to implement the decrees of the Council (see Question 1) and hence would seem to be implicated also in any possible future censure.

As we have more than once remarked in these pages, the turbulence and confusion which have followed Vatican II cannot simply be characterized as the "bitter fruits" of the Council itself—just as we cannot assign "bitter fruits" to the great Council of Nicaea, the model of all subsequent orthodox councils (as already remarked on in Questions 17 and 19), because perhaps a majority of Catholic bishops, at least in the East, fell away from Catholic orthodoxy for a longer or shorter time in the decades following the Council of Nicaea. This was, as we have also noted, precisely the situation to which the great Saint Athanasius addressed his life's work.¹ But the defection from orthodoxy which followed the Council of Nicaea was scarcely the Council's own fault. We must not fall into the elementary logical fallacy which the scholastics designated "*post hoc, ergo propter hoc*," "this follows that, therefore it was caused by that." Because something follows something else, it is *not* necessarily caused by it.

¹ For a brief account of the defection from Nicene orthodoxy in the Fourth Century, see Hughes, *The Church in Crisis*, pp. 37-45. For a longer account, see Duchesne, *Early History of the Christian Church*, chaps. IV-XIII.

However, those, who think there is still some reason to “appeal” to some future pope or Council, on traditional grounds against the things that have changed in the Church since Vatican II, should recall that the First Vatican Council *defined* that the acts of a supreme Pontiff are not subject to such an “appeal”:

The judgment of the Apostolic See, whose authority is unsurpassed, is not subject to review by anyone; nor is anyone allowed to pass judgment on its decision. Therefore, those who say that it is permitted to appeal to an ecumenical council from the decisions of the Roman Pontiff, as to an authority superior to the Roman Pontiff, are far from the straight path of truth.²

As with regard to the First Vatican Council’s definition that the Roman pontiff has supreme jurisdiction in matters of discipline and government—and not just “in faith and morals”—so with regard to the above dogmatic teaching, we find the practice of many who profess to follow traditional Catholicism quite at variance with the traditional Church teaching on the matter. Unfortunately, the principal occupation and preoccupation of many Traditionalists and traditionalist periodicals in the years following the Second Vatican Council have surely been to “review the judgment of the Apostolic See,” and to “pass judgment on its decision[s].”

Be that as it may, the question of the condemnation of Pope Honorius I arises with enough frequency to warrant our reviewing it briefly here so as to determine whether the question really has any relevance to the Church in the post-Vatican II years.

The bare facts are these:³ Sergius, a patriarch of Constantinople in the seventh century, hoping to reconcile the Monophysites who had rejected the Council of Chalcedon of 451, devised a formula to which he thought both Monophysites and Catholics could subscribe. The Monophysites thought that the Catholics were “dividing Christ” when they spoke of His two natures—a divine nature and a human nature—in one divine person.

2 Vatican Council I, Dogmatic Constitution *Pastor Aeternus* on the Church of Christ, in Neuner and Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, p. 224.

3 In this account of the “case” of Pope Honorius I, we follow primarily Msgr. Philip Hughes, *A History of the Church*, vol. I, “The World in Which the Church Was Founded,” rev. edition (NY: Sheed and Ward, 1949), pp. 290-305.

Question 22: Condemn the Acts of Another Pope?

The reconciling formula of the Patriarch Sergius, therefore, avoided the question of “natures” altogether and spoke instead of there being in Our Lord only one source of action, or will. That this theory, which came to be called Monothelitism, really amounted to Monophysitism in another guise was not immediately apparent to all, although it was subsequently brought out by Sophronius, a learned Egyptian monk who later became patriarch of Jerusalem.

But in his anxiety to promote his formula of reconciliation, Patriarch Sergius wrote to Pope Honorius I, hoping to rally the authority of the latter behind the hoped-for reconciliation with the Monophysites, who by then had been separated from the Catholic Church for nearly two centuries. In writing to Honorius, Sergius did not reveal that questions had already been raised about his formula by Sophronius of Jerusalem. Monsignor Philip Hughes describes the fateful response to the Patriarch’s letter made by this pope:

The reply of the Pope Honorius I (625-638), is curiously interesting, because he fails utterly to grasp the point of the patriarch’s letter. Sergius had before him the Monophysite contention that since Catholics repudiated the phrase “union in one nature,” they must believe that in Christ there are two beings united by a moral union. To disprove this he urges that Catholic belief accords to Christ Our Lord one only faculty of action. This point the pope wholly overlooks or, more truly, misunderstands. Not the singleness of the faculty but the unity in action between divine and the human is the subject of the pope’s reply. Certainly, Honorius answers, Christ always acted with the two natures in harmony, no conflict between them being possible, the unity of action being perfect . . . he agrees with Sergius that the question should be left where it stands [i.e., no further discussion of it permitted].

“Obviously, Sergius and Honorius are at cross-purposes,” Monsignor Hughes continues. “They are not discussing the same thing at all. But the consequences of the misunderstanding could hardly have been more serious.”⁴

4 Hughes, *A History of the Church*, p. 294.

Where Pope Honorius failed was in not noticing that a new heresy was springing up and then not moving to censure it. It was not that he was in any way compromised by the heresy itself; he just did not understand that Monothelitism was a new heresy in a new and particularly subtle form. Patriarch Sergius had not, in any case, explained the whole thing for his own reasons; and therefore the pope's actions in forbidding further discussions made it difficult for the orthodox forces to bring out the objections to it.

A successor of Pope Honorius, Pope John IV (640-642), even protested to a later patriarch of Constantinople that Honorius had been deliberately misled: the words of Honorius' fatal letter to Sergius, John IV declared "some have twisted to their own ends, alleging Honorius to have taught that there is but one will to [Christ's] divinity and humanity which is indeed contrary to truth."⁵

"That Honorius held and taught the faith of Chalcedon is clear enough, despite the muddle," Monsignor Hughes summarizes. "It is equally clear that he failed to grasp that a new question had arisen and was under discussion; clear, also, that he assisted the innovators by thus imposing silence alike on them and on their orthodox critics; clear, finally, that he definitely said, in so many words, that there is but one will in Christ"—referring, however, to the unity of action in Christ's two natures, human and divine.⁶

It was to be more than fifty years before the question was finally settled at the Third General Council of Constantinople in 681 (the sixth general council of the Church). By that time the whole issue had been thoroughly aired, not the least because the Byzantine emperors more than once in those years tried to impose the Monothelite "reconciliation" on the Church—efforts which the successors of Honorius in the See of Peter, especially Pope Saint Martin I (649-655), took the lead in resisting from the moment that it was clear that heresy was involved.

Included among the condemnations of those who had fostered the heresy which Constantinople III finally issued in 681 was the name of Pope Honorius "because in his writings to Sergius he followed his opinions and confirmed his impious teachings."⁷ This was not entirely true to the

5 *Ibid.*, p. 296.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 295.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 302.

facts, of course, but when the acts of Constantinople III were sent to the then reigning Pope to be confirmed, this Pope, Leo II (682-683), did confirm them, letting the condemnation of Honorius stand and waxing even more indignant than the Council had over his predecessor's failure to act nearly a half-century earlier.

Leo II explained in a letter to the bishops of Spain just what Pope Honorius I had done to deserve the condemnation both of a general council and of a subsequent pope: Honorius "did not extinguish the fire of heretical teaching, as behooved one who exercised the authority of the apostles, but by his negligence blew the flames still higher."⁸ In other words, he was censured not for anything he did but for what he failed to do.

It is thus clear that Pope Honorius in no way compromised the papal primacy or papal infallibility "by his negligence." A pope is guarded from error in what he positively teaches. He *could*, of course, be remiss in failing to speak out in a timely manner. The latter is all that is involved in the censure of Honorius I. A similar charge of failing to speak out against modernism or other errors and abuses cannot be brought against Paul VI, however. We have cited numerous instances in these pages where Paul VI, unlike Honorius, did speak out (Questions 11, 15, 17, 19 and 21).

If Pope Paul VI is to be calumniated as "another Honorius," what is the *specific heresy* (and one that is equivalent to the spread of Monothelite dogma) he helped impose on the universal Church? None can be brought forth.

Even non-Catholic historians have acknowledged that Honorius never positively taught heresy. He was condemned not as a formal heretic, but as a "*fautor haeresis*," i.e., as one who unwittingly helped spread the heresy of one will and one energy. He "fanned it by his negligence," Pope Leo II explained, indicating the precise sense in which the condemnatory sentence of the Sixth Ecumenical Council was to be understood. Pope Hadrian II (867-872), in a letter read at the Eighth General Council, stressed further that such an unprecedented condemnation of a pope by an ecumenical council was only possible because the *Apostolic See itself* had consented to it (a remarkable testimony, by the way, to the Roman See's "plenitude of power" in the Church).⁹

Thus, continuing to bring up the history of Honorius as if this case really applied to the Church in the post-conciliar era, is not legitimate.

8 Ibid.

9 T.G. Jalland, *The Church and the Papacy* (London: SPCK, 1946), pp. 363-367.

It resembles the use of the quotation from Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, cited with perhaps equal or greater frequency than the case of Honorius by some Traditionalists, where Saint Paul remarks that he "opposed [Peter] to his face" (Gal 2:11). And why? Because the "first pope" had "acted insincerely" (Gal. 2:13)—in other words, because his *personal conduct* was deserving of censure, not his exercise of the divine authority granted to him as the Prince of the Apostles by Jesus Christ. It is also noteworthy that Paul thus "opposed" Peter to his face; that is to say, in person, not by stirring up absent third persons against him, as is done today in speeches, articles, books, and letters by many of those who justify themselves by reference to Saint Paul's example. Furthermore, Saint Paul was not self-appointed to the task of establishing Christian policy towards the Gentiles, but was specially appointed by God as Apostle to the Gentiles, and recognized as such by Saint Peter. Saint Paul was "sent" in a way that those who appoint themselves to criticize the pope or the Council are surely not.

To pretend to be defending "Catholic Tradition" by publicly opposing or publicly criticizing the visible head of the Church and guarantor of that Tradition is a most singular way of proceeding, especially when carried out by those who have no claim, as Saint Paul did, to be special vessels of election (see Question 23).

The Honorius case seems, rather, to have been dredged up by the enemies of the Church in order to oppose the absolutely central Catholic Tradition of the Roman primacy. If the Honorius case is the worst indictment that can be brought against this Tradition of the primacy, the enemies of the Church should properly concede how *good* the "track-record" of the popes has been.

Henri Daniel-Rops, as orthodox Catholic historian, believed that the whole Honorius issue was blown far out of proportion at Constantinople III by the desire of the Greeks "to depreciate the authority of Rome."¹⁰ Even the mild-mannered Monsignor Philip Hughes raises his voice slightly when commenting on how "controversial archeologists, straining every resource to embarrass the champions of the Roman primacy, turned to the record of the Sixth General Council and with more ingenuity than good faith tried to put on the decrees a meaning they were never meant to bear."¹¹

10 Henri Daniel-Rops, *L'Eglise des Temps Barbares* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1950), p. 384.

11 Hughes, *A History of the Church*, p. 302.

Question 22: Condemn the Acts of Another Pope?

What does it all mean to us today, in the aftermath of Vatican II? The authors are not really sure why the case is brought up so persistently by Traditionalists unless to imply that Popes John XXIII and Paul VI might similarly fall under a condemnation at some time in the future, just as the unfortunate Pope Honorius I did.

But it has not been shown what they could conceivably be condemned for. The Council was conducted with the virtually unanimous participation of the world's Catholic bishops. In any case, the judgment of a council or a future pope on the conduct of any predecessor would be a wholly different thing than a similar judgment rendered by private persons, say, in the columns of some traditionalist paper, who may imagine they are defending Catholic Tradition but who often curiously end up using the same accusations and allegations as the enemies of "the Roman primacy," which is to say, the enemies of the Church. This is a singular way to "defend" the Catholic Tradition!

Even if the conduct of some pope was arguably deserving of condemnation, for "his negligence" or whatever, his official acts as pope would nevertheless in no way be rendered invalid. Nothing that Pope Honorius said or did during his papacy was in any way affected by the censure he received fifty years later at the hands of Constantinople III and his successor, Leo II. Certainly, disobedience to his authority during his reign by any of the faithful presuming to anticipate the official judgment of the Church would in no way whatsoever have been justified. Even those who might believe that John XXIII or Paul VI deserved a similar judgment could not adduce that belief as reason for not obeying their authority or that of their successors. The case of Honorius simply does not *apply* to the situation in the Church today.

Perhaps what really applies to a case like this is the saying of Our Lord: "Let the dead bury their dead" (Mt. 8:22).

Question 23

Yet our Faith is clearly under attack today. Must we not fight back against all the heresy and infidelity? Didn't Saint Robert Bellarmine teach that it was licit to resist even a pontiff who attacked souls?

When the question comes up of how we “fight” in and for the Church of God, many people make two fundamental mistakes:

(1) They regard the Church as primarily a political-type organization in which the weapons of politics—pressure, exposure, and the like—are seen as appropriate; and (2), on the analogy of democratic politics where the system *provides* for “throwing the rascals out” when they do not follow the popular will, they challenge the authorities of the Church directly as if these authorities were office-holders under a democratic system.

Neither of these reactions is really appropriate for a Catholic with regard to the Church. Concerning the first reaction, that we must exert pressures on the authorities of the Church and expose their negligences and lapses, we must remember that “we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against the powers. . . against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12), i.e., ultimately against evil spirits; and that spiritual, not political, weapons are what are most required in such a spiritual battle.

As regards the idea that Church authorities might be challenged and even removed from office by means of popular pressures, as if they were congressmen or a president confronted with a Watergate cover-up or something of the sort, we must remember that the Church is not founded by the people upon a democratic principle of government but upon the principle of a divinely established authority coming from Christ through the pope and bishops down to the faithful. In establishing His Church upon His apostles, Christ said: “He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects him who sent Me” (Lk. 10:6).

When it is asked how we “fight” those who are sowing error and confusion in the Church, what is forgotten are the words of Our Lord that only “*if my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight*” (Jn. 18:36). But Christ's Kingdom is *not* of this world and hence we are not to

“fight” in the political sense suggested by the question—not if we are truly reflecting on what it means to be a servant of Christ.

Witness to our faith and bear fruit in our lives, yes; but “fight”? This does not mean that we should not proclaim Catholic truth and refute error with whatever means available to us, or respectfully to draw the attention of Church authorities to certain errors or abuses. But we lay people have not been appointed to rule in the Church as though it were our responsibility to call a halt to the errors and abuses that we might see. The Church, as established by Christ, is ruled by a sacred hierarchy, whose members “the Holy Spirit has made. . . guardians, to feed the Church of the Lord” (Acts 20:28). The faithful are enjoined to “obey your prelates and be subject to them” (Heb. 13:17).

The structure of the Church is not to be changed just because she is undergoing a crisis. She has undergone many crises in her long history and has eventually triumphed over them all. No doubt the same will be true of the present crisis. It is part of our faith that the “gates of hell” will not prevail (cf. Mt. 16:18). God has permitted today’s errors and confusion for reasons best known to Himself, and He will bring good out of it. It is not our duty to take active charge of correcting errors or abuses in the Church but rather, first of all, to try to be better Catholics and better examples, *especially* today, when there are so many bad examples.

But let us take a look at the teaching of Saint Robert Bellarmine, that it would be licit to “resist” even a pontiff who attacked souls. This is usually quoted as follows:

Just as it is licit to resist the pontiff who attacks the body, so also it is licit to resist him who attacks souls, or who disturbs the civil order, or above all, him who tries to destroy the Church. I say that it is licit to resist him who tries to destroy the Church. I say that it is licit to resist him by not doing what he orders and by impeding the execution of his will; it is not licit, however, to judge him, to punish him or depose him, for these are acts proper to a superior.¹

1 Saint Robert Bellarmine, *De Romano Pontifice*, bk. II, chap. 29. The Latin text can be found in *Roberti Bellarmini, Opera Omnia, Editio nova iuxta Venetam anni MDCCXXI, Dicata Emmentiss. Cardinali Xisto Riario Sforza, Archiepiscopo Neapolitano*, (Naples, 1872), *Tomus Primus*, pp. 117-118.

The first thing that has to be said about this opinion of Saint Robert Bellarmine is that for it to apply at all in the case of the changes in the Church it would have to be shown that a pontiff was in fact, "attacking souls"; otherwise it would not apply.

We have shown, in our replies to all the questions raised about the Mass and the reforms of Vatican II, that by no stretch of the imagination was Pope Paul VI "attacking souls." Nor have his successors done so in continuing his policies. So the quotation, in fact, does not apply to our post-conciliar situation as far as the pope is concerned. Though it is one of the quotations most frequently encountered in traditionalist literature, it really begs the question.

When we examine the context in which Saint Robert Bellarmine was writing, we find that it has even *less* applicability than at first sight. The quotation is taken from one of Saint Robert's replies to a long series of objections to the authority of the pope drawn from various Protestant authors. The main point at issue in Saint Robert's discussion is that the pope has no superior on earth. As a human being he may have every frailty that flesh is heir to, of course, and so Saint Robert Bellarmine, for the sake of argument, entertains many hypothetical possibilities, some of them even frivolous, to show that none of them really impinges upon or annuls the pope's *authority*.

The particular question Bellarmine addresses here is taken from the Protestant allegation that the pope "murders souls by his own evil example." In reply, Saint Robert concedes that one might resist a pontiff who really was assaulting the body or soul but goes on to specify that, in the case of the pope, considering the authority he possesses in his office, one could only "resist" him in a passive and negative way, that is, by "not doing what he orders," by abstaining from following his orders, but not by taking any positive action against him.

It is ironic that a passage from Saint Robert Bellarmine, which was written with the express intention of defending the unique and unsurpassed authority of the pope, is invoked today to undermine that authority. In no way can this passage justify rejecting the New Order of the Mass, for instance, since the condition of the pontiff "attacking souls" does not apply. In any case, those who do not attend the *Novus Ordo*—"not doing what he orders"—usually do not stop with such passive resistance. They go on to do exactly what Saint Robert Bellarmine says it is *not* licit to do: they "judge" the pope and "punish" him, i.e., they attack the authority he

had to revise the Roman Missal in the way that he revised it. This approach reverses Saint Robert Bellarmine's teaching to say exactly the opposite of what he taught.

When we go on to consider the further question of the faithful "fighting" in the Church for what they want, even rebelling or murmuring against the mandates of legitimate Church authority, we encounter a rather solid Catholic tradition against that idea. This is true even when it is conceded, as it has to be conceded today, that there *are* evils to be fought against. But then we cannot lose sight of one plain fact of being a Catholic that, as Pope Leo XIII taught, "there are in the Church two grades, very distinct by their nature: the shepherds and the flock, that is to say, the rulers and their people. It is the function of the first order to teach, to govern, to guide men through life, to impose rules; the second has the duty to be submissive to the first, to obey, to carry out orders, to render honor."² Thus a Catholic is not justified in fighting *against* the hierarchy. The very nature of the hierarchical structure of the Church requires respect and deference from the Catholic for his prelates: "Honor thy father." This does not mean that the faithful, especially the laity, do not have any *rights* in the Church. On the contrary, as Pope Pius XII taught:

The layman has a right to receive from the priest every spiritual good, so that he may realize the salvation of his soul and attain Christian perfection: when the fundamental rights of the Christian are at stake he may assert his needs; it is the meaning and the very goal of the life of the Church which is here at stake, as well as the responsibility before God of the priest no less than of the layman.³

But, even though all the faithful have rights, there are limits on what they can say or do, even when real objective evils arise, because, after all, the faithful are not in charge of the Church; the pastors are, and Christ set it up that way. What the laity may do, even when they legitimately "assert their needs," is somewhat limited by the very hierarchical structure of the Church.

2 Pope Leo XIII, *Letter Est Sane Molestum* (December 17, 1888), to the Archbishop of Tours, in O'Gorman, *The Church*, p. 280.

3 Pope Pius XII, *Allocation to Irish Pilgrims* (October 8, 1957), in *The Church*, p. 766.

The Second Vatican Council nevertheless went on to make definitive the rights the laity do enjoy in the Church:

Like all Christians, the laity have the right to receive in abundance the help of spiritual goods of the Church, especially that of the word of God and the sacraments from the pastors. To the latter the laity should disclose their needs and desires with that liberty and confidence which befits children of God and brothers of Christ. By reason of the knowledge, competence or preeminence which they have the laity are empowered—indeed sometimes obliged—to manifest their opinion on those things which pertain to the good of the Church. If the occasion should arise this should be done through the institutions established by the Church for that purpose and always with truth, courage and prudence and with reverence and charity towards those who, by reason of their office, represent the person of Christ.⁴

Now this teaching is hardly a mandate for “fighting” in the sense of demanding that one’s views prevail in the Church, as if she were merely some kind of a political entity rather than the Mystical Body of Christ. The Council specifies that a Christian spirit should prevail in whatever representations may be made to the hierarchy. Indeed the Council goes on to teach that, once they have made known their needs “with truth, courage and prudence and with reverence and charity,” the laity may then properly commend the issue to the providence of God:

Like all Christians, the laity should promptly accept in Christian obedience what is decided by the pastors who, as teachers and rulers of the Church, represent Christ. In this they will follow Christ’s example who, by his obedience unto death, opened the blessed way of the liberty of the sons of God to all men. Nor should they fail to commend to God in their prayers those who have been placed over them, who indeed keep watch as having to

4 Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 37.

render an account of our souls, that they may do this with joy and not with grief.⁵

Lest it seem “untraditional” to some that the Catholic faithful are required by the Catholic faith itself to be not only obedient but docile to the Church authorities placed over them, and not to contest and “fight” them, we hasten to quote earlier Church pronouncements which show that this teaching has, in fact, been constant and consistent.

Pope Pius IX, for example, in 1854, taught as follows:

We beg you urgently to be each day more ardent in your love for religion, to employ your zeal for the maintenance of peace, and not only never to undertake anything against the Church or against your pastors—as those are accustomed to do who have severed themselves from Catholic unity—but still more to lend the support of your counsel and your efforts so that the Catholic Church will grow and prosper among you, and all will be animated by those sentiments of respect, devotion, and docility, which they ought to have, whether towards the authority of Peter and his successors the Roman Pontiffs, divinely charged by Christ Our Lord to feed—that is to say, to rule and govern—the Church in its entirety, or to the sacred and venerable authority which bishops have over their own flocks. . . .⁶

The teachings of Leo XIII in the same vein are almost too numerous to mention, but we quote one from the year 1885:

By certain indications it is not difficult to conclude that among Catholics—doubtless as a result of current evils—there are some who, far from satisfied with the condition of “subject” which is theirs in the Church . . . think they are allowed to examine and judge after their own fashion, the acts of authority. A misplaced opinion, certainly. If it were to prevail, it would do very grave harm to the Church of

5 Ibid.

6 Pope Pius IX, Encyclical *Neminem Vestrum* to the Armenian Catholics (February 2, 1854), in *The Church*, p. 157.

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God, in which, by the manifest will of her Divine Founder, there are to be distinguished in the most absolute fashion two parties: the teaching and the taught, the Shepherd and the flock, among whom there is one who is the head and the Supreme Shepherd of all.

To the shepherds alone was given all power to teach, to judge, to direct; on the faithful was imposed the duty of following their teaching, of submitting with docility to their judgment, and of allowing themselves to be governed, corrected, and guided by them in the way of salvation. Thus, it is an absolute necessity for the simple faithful to submit in mind and heart to their own pastors, and for the latter to submit with them to the Head and Supreme Pastor.⁷

Here is another one from Leo XIII dating from the year 1888:

No, it cannot be permitted that laymen who profess to be Catholic should go so far as openly to arrogate to themselves in the columns of a newspaper, the right to denounce, and to find fault, with the greatest license and according to their own good pleasure, with every sort of person, not excepting bishops, and think that with the single exception of matters of faith they are allowed to entertain any opinion which may please them and exercise the right to judge everyone after their own fashion.⁸

Indeed, as we have already seen in the reply to Question 3, Pope Pius IX condemned in his encyclical *Quanta Cura* the proposition that “without sinning and without at all departing from the profession of the Catholic faith, it is possible to refuse assent and obedience to those decisions and decrees of the Apostolic See whose declared object is the general good of the Church and its rights and discipline, provided only that such decisions do not touch upon dogmas of faith or morals.”⁹

7 Pope Leo XIII, Letter *Epistola Tua* to Cardinal Guibert, Archbishop of Paris (June 17, 1885), in *The Church*, p. 267 ff.

8 Pope Leo XIII, Letter *Est Sane Molestum*, in O’Gorman, *The Church*, p. 279.

9 Pope Pius IX, *Quanta Cura*, in Neuner and Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, pp. 267-268.

The general principle that the Catholic faithful have an obligation of docility and obedience to the sacred hierarchy in everything pertaining to our holy religion is thus blindingly clear. No Catholic could possibly deny this principle. Problems arise today because in the midst of the present crisis, given the confusion that is endemic in the Church, some Catholics perceive the hierarchy itself as not upholding the faith and discipline of the Church. The post-Vatican II changes are thought to be the causes of the proliferation of errors and abuses throughout the post-conciliar Church. The temptation is to assume that traditional Church teachings about the need for docility and obedience to the hierarchy, no matter how clearly and firmly they may have been established, simply cannot *apply* to our unique post-conciliar situation. Extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures. So it is argued. No Catholic who cares about the faith can simply remain passive and docile in the face of action by a hierarchy which itself is held to undermine the faith and discipline of the Church or—a much more plausible hypothesis—of *inaction* and *permissiveness* on the part of the hierarchy which is harmful to the Church. By this latter is meant that the hierarchy is considered to be merely looking on while others, be they dissenting theologians, liturgical innovators, “liberated” priests or nuns, sex educators, “new” catechists opposed to teaching doctrine, or whatever, enjoy the “freedom of the Church” to carry out their activities uncorrected. Indeed average Catholics are often left unenlightened and uncorrected when they show by their plain words and actions (or in the results of the latest poll) that *they* now think they can pick and choose among the doctrines and disciplines of the Church.

This is the situation some of the faithful think they see today in the Church. And there is evidence, available to anyone, that their eyes are not always deceiving them. So they ask: Where are the bishops? Where, indeed, is the pope? How can anyone simply be “docile” towards leaders seen as not doing their jobs?

So the question is asked, and so the whole traditionalist phenomenon which we have been examining in these pages arises as one—mistaken—answer to it.

The two authors do not share this unduly pessimistic view about the post-conciliar popes and hierarchy, as the present book testifies. We have shown throughout the book that the official enactments of recent popes or the Second Vatican Council cannot be stigmatized as the cause

of the present crisis of the Church. The real cause has primarily been disobedience to Church authority. We have demonstrated in particular in the answer to Question 19 that the Holy See, especially, throughout the entire period of the present crisis, has continued to function as Christ promised. Rome cannot be blamed for the crisis. Unexpected as the crisis was, the Holy See has nevertheless consistently tried to face up to it. And it is simply common sense, whoever or whatever is to blame, to realize that the authorities of the Church, not only in Rome but at every level, now have to be allowed both time and elbow room, if they are to be able to deal effectively with a crisis of the magnitude of the present one. In short, public criticisms, exposés, recriminations, reproaches, confrontations, or other forms of “pressure” on the Holy See or the sacred hierarchy over the present problems of the Church are hardly what is called for. Human nature being what it is, these things will only be resented. They can even be temporarily mistaken for the real “problem,” and may thus even delay the solution to some of the problems the Traditionalists may be correct in recognizing but wrong in their method of resolving.

This having been said, however, the fact still remains that if the laity, according to traditional Catholic doctrine, have a duty to be obedient and docile to the hierarchy, as we have shown, the hierarchy, according to that same traditional Catholic doctrine, has a duty which it too must carry out. It has an obligation not merely to teach authentic doctrine and establish disciplinary and liturgical norms in some formal or official way; it also has an obligation to enforce both orthodoxy and discipline on the part of everybody within the Church. The members of the hierarchy must enforce both doctrine and discipline—thus says the second half of the scriptural quotation we already cited earlier exhorting the faithful to obey their prelates—“as men who will have to give an account” (Heb. 13:17). However much the Church today may prefer, in Pope John XXIII’s phrase, “to make use of the medicine of mercy rather than that of severity,”¹⁰ the latter is surely *not* to be excluded if proved necessary. This is inherent in the fact that the Church has been given *authority*.

In the context, Pope John was in any case referring to the stance the Church should adopt towards the *world*, to try to win it over, since honey attracts more readily than vinegar, as Saint Francis de Sales so aptly

¹⁰ Pope John XXIII, “Opening Speech to the Council,” in Abbott, *The Documents of Vatican Council II*, p. 716.

observed. Pope John's words thus cannot be used as the justification for undue indulgence or laxity towards those *within the Church* who reject, in whatever degree, the Church's legitimate teaching and discipline.

This is not merely "traditional" Catholic doctrine. Vatican Council II, in *Lumen Gentium*, taught that "episcopal consecration confers the *duty of teaching and ruling*" (no. 21); "all the bishops have the obligation of fostering and safeguarding the unity of faith and of *upholding the discipline* which is common to the whole Church" (no. 23); that "the bishops are heralds of the faith . . . teachers endowed with the authority of Christ . . . and with watchfulness *they ward off whatever errors threaten their flock*" (no. 25); that "bishops have a sacred right and a duty before the Lord of legislating for and of *passing judgment* on their subjects, as well as of *regulating everything that concerns the good order* of divine worship . . ." (no. 27).¹¹

These passages establish beyond any doubt that Vatican II envisaged a continuation of firm discipline. Pope John's "medicine of mercy" was not primarily intended to apply here. Has this been fully understood by the hierarchy since the Council?

It is no part of the intention of the authors to charge the members of the hierarchy, or any individuals among them, with being derelict or remiss in carrying out or enforcing the Church's teachings in the post-conciliar period. It is sufficient for our purposes here to state that the hierarchy has been *perceived* as being deficient in this regard by at least some of the faithful. The very existence of a traditionalist movement bears witness to this unhappy fact. That the hierarchy can itself thus be perceived today as being in the wrong, even if only occasionally, even if only on one single point, creates an obvious problem for the faithful Catholic. What is a Catholic supposed to do, if, for example, his bishop, the prelate he is supposed to obey, turns out to be out of line on some Catholic doctrine or basic Church practice?

First of all, from all that has been said and quoted from Church teachings above, we can immediately reply that it is neither the duty nor the function of the faithful, on their own, to *correct* a wayward prelate. Pope Leo XIII made this very clear as far back as 1888:

If by chance there should be in the ranks of the episcopate a bishop not sufficiently mindful of his dignity and apparently

¹¹ Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, nos. 21, 23, 27. (Emphasis added).

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unfaithful to one of his sacred obligations, in spite of this he would lose nothing of his power, and, so long as he remained in communion with the Roman Pontiff, it would certainly not be permitted to anyone to relax in any detail the respect and obedience which are due his authority. On the other hand, to scrutinize the actions of a bishop, to criticize them, does not belong to individual Catholics, but concerns only those who, in the sacred hierarchy, have a superior power; above all, it concerns the Supreme Pontiff, for it is to him that Christ confided the care of feeding not only all the lambs, but even the sheep.¹²

Pope Leo XIII returned to this point again two years later in his encyclical *Sapientiae Christianae*, issued in 1890:

Among the prelates, indeed, one or other there may be affording scope to criticism either in regard to personal conduct or in reference to opinions by him entertained about points of doctrine; but no private person may arrogate to himself the office of judge which Christ our Lord has bestowed on that one alone whom He placed in charge of His lambs and of His sheep.¹³

The import of these papal teachings is unmistakable: correction of bishops is reserved to the pope. Leo XIII recognized, of course, that the faithful possess a “right of appeal” over the head of a possibly wayward bishop, a right that Vatican II’s Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, as we have quoted it above, would surely allow. Even in allowing such a “right of appeal” for the faithful, however, Leo XIII evidently excludes the kind of harsh public criticism of a bishop or bishops which some Traditionalists have considered themselves fully entitled to make in recent years. Leo XIII said:

When the faithful have grave cause for complaint, they are allowed to put the whole matter before the Roman Pontiff,

¹² Pope Leo XIII, *Est Sane Molestum*, in O’Gorman, *The Church*, p. 280

¹³ Pope Leo XIII, *Encyclical Sapientiae Christianae*, in Gilson, *The Church Speaks*, pp. 267-268.

provided always that, safeguarding prudence and the moderation counseled by concern for the common good, they do not give vent to outcries and recriminations which contribute rather to the rise of divisions and ill-feeling, or certainly increase them.¹⁴

Clearly then it is not the duty of the laity to correct delinquent prelates. Equally clear, and this is axiomatic for a Catholic, is that the only standard or criterion by which an individual bishop *could* be judged to be out of line would be whether he adhered in his teaching and acts to the doctrine and discipline established by the Roman Pontiff. "In order that the episcopate itself might be one and undivided," Vatican I taught, "and that the whole multitude of believers might be preserved in unity of faith and communion by means of a closely united priesthood, [Christ] placed Saint Peter at the head of the other apostles."¹⁵ The Most Reverend Jerome Hamer, O.P., Secretary of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, told the United States bishops in November 1978, that it is always *presupposed* that a "bishop's teaching is carried out 'in communion with the Roman Pontiff,' in other words, within hierarchical communion and in accordance with its norms."¹⁶

But what if it is not? What if a bishop's teaching, even on a single point, does not accord with a known teaching of the pope? Or, what if, silent or inaccessible himself, a bishop allows others the freedom to teach or preach at variance with the Holy See's teaching? Or what if a bishop sanctions or allows practices in the doctrinal realm at variance with the Holy See's teaching? Or what if a bishop sanctions or allows practices in the disciplinary realm at variance with what Rome has decreed? Supposing any of these "ifs" were actually verified, it is obvious that a problem would be created for the Catholic desirous of following the Church—a problem would be created for him almost *in the degree* that he desired to follow the Church.

The practical problem that really, and acutely, arises is this: to what extent must a Catholic *obey* the directives of a bishop who is himself out of line with what the Holy See has enjoined? This is an acutely serious

14 Pope Leo XIII, *Est Sane Molestum*, in O'Gorman, *The Church*, p. 280.

15 Vatican Council I, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ *Pastor Aeternus*, in Neuner and Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, p. 220.

16 Jerome Hamer, O. P., "To Preach the Gospel: Reflections on the Episcopal Magisterium," in *L'Osservatore Romano* (English Edition, January 29, 1979).

problem for the faithful who believe their prelates *are* out of line, and who, whether or not they are correct in their judgment, sometimes go further and join a traditionalist “little church” as the only practical alternative to living under a wayward bishop.

Usually the problem is not quite so clear-cut. Certainly no bishop could be held to be out of line for having instituted, for example, the *Novus Ordo*. The bishop was certainly obliged to do this and was wholly in line with the Holy See in doing so. There are other genuine cases which create problems for the conscientious Catholic—problems which may lead him to be tempted by the traditionalist response.

Let us take the case of, say, a diocesan policy mandating or allowing First Communion before First Confession when the reverse order represents the true discipline of the Holy See in this matter, as has been clear beyond all doubt ever since the publication of the General Catechetical Directory in 1971. Alternatively, let us imagine a diocesan catechetical program mandating deficient religion texts and perhaps forbidding other texts admittedly orthodox, or a diocesan program in so-called “sex education” failing to respect traditional Catholic teachings about chastity, modesty, marriage, and the regulation of births. The problem of episcopal tolerance of priests or theologians publicly taking positions at variance with known Church doctrine could be cited, or a similar tolerance of liturgical aberrations contrary to the established discipline of the Holy See such as “self-service” from the chalice, the use of “altar girls,”¹⁷ Communion from “extraordinary ministers” while vested celebrants benignly sit in the sanctuary, dialogue homilies preached by the people, liturgical dancing, etc.

It would be hard to deny that such things are sometimes encountered today. And while we grant that it is the responsibility of the members of the hierarchy to handle these problems in the manner they believe most suitable—to correct or, possibly, withhold correction temporarily to avoid

17 When the first edition of this book was published, female altar servers were not permitted and their use was a violation of the liturgical norms at that time. But a Circular Letter from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments to the Presidents of Episcopal Conferences dated March 15, 1994, announced that female service at the altar *could* be allowed under certain limited circumstances. The text of the letter is available on-line at <http://www.ewtn.com/library/curia/cdwcomm.htm>.

A further clarification was issued by the Congregation on July 7, 2001 which stated that only a diocesan bishop may decide whether to permit female servers in his diocese; that “the nonordained faithful do not have a right to service at the altar”; and that “the obligation to support groups of altar boys will always remain. . . in encouraging future priestly vocations.” No priest may be obliged by his bishop to use altar girls. The full text of the letter is available online at <http://www.adoremus.org/CDW-AltarServers.html>.

greater evils—the point that we are making here is that if tolerance of abuses becomes a policy of *laissez-faire*, for whatever period of time, this is bound to have an effect on some of the faithful.

When average Catholics encounter un-Catholic manifestations of whatever kind in Catholic parishes or Catholic schools, they almost inevitably conclude that these things could not be going on without the sanction of the bishop, whether this is in fact true or not. In that case, some may also conclude that said bishop is encouraging something in contradiction to the Catholic Church which they have always known. They reason that, since what they are seeing itself has to be heretical, the pope and bishops and the Council are what is wrong. Catholics who react this way are the natural recruits for the various independent chapels still illicitly offering Tridentine Masses which at least preserve the *appearance* of the Church which they have always known. It is regrettable to have to make this point, but we here touch upon one of the principal *reasons* for the rejection of the Second Vatican Council and the *Novus Ordo*, i.e., the fact that the post-conciliar Church has sometimes appeared to be no longer entirely “One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.”

The authors do not for a moment accept this proposition. The Church still bears her traditional marks. We only point to the fact that some Catholics have come to believe it in the midst of the post-conciliar confusion and ambiguity.

Other Catholics are aware that aberrations, which may have occurred, are not what the Council or the post-conciliar Church really called for, but, indeed, go against what they called for. Nevertheless, these Catholics too can face a problem which sometimes becomes a real crisis of conscience: to what extent can they go along with or obey things which apparently have the sanction, or at least the tolerance, of the bishop, but which are not in accord with what the Holy See has enjoined? Is a bishop who sanctions or allows such things still entitled to the obedience of the faithful subject to him? Do the faithful have to follow him when he is apparently not following the pope?

The short answer to these questions can be summed up by saying that such a bishop continues to be entitled to obedience in *everything that he legitimately commands*. If he should command or mandate one or more things that are not legitimate, we could in *that or in those cases only* follow Saint Robert Bellarmine’s principle of “not doing what he orders.” In other words, we could decline to follow a command or mandate

in a case where we had certain knowledge that a positive action would be against Church discipline or faith. For example: we could decline to enroll our children in a deficient school program which could harm their faith or morals; or we could remove them from such a program; or, aware of the Roman discipline, we could respectfully request first Confession before first Communion for our children, even if it is contrary to diocesan practice. Other examples easily come to mind along the same lines.

However, when “not doing what he orders” in such concrete instances as these, we could *not* legitimately go on to conclude that such a bishop was no longer a “real” bishop, or that no further obedience of any kind was owed to him. For we would still be obliged to obey him as our bishop in all other respects.

Let us suppose that a bishop permitted dissenters from the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* to teach or preach in his diocese, promoted or allowed general absolution contrary to Vatican norms, mandated questionable religion texts, and permitted his religion teachers to prepare children to receive first Communion before first Confession. Knowing the true teaching or discipline of the Pope on all these matters, we would be obliged to follow the Church instead of the bishop *in these particular matters*—and to the extent that they impinged personally on us or those for whom the Church says we are responsible. But, so long as we remained under his episcopal jurisdiction, we would be obliged to follow him in all other respects in which presumably he would be teaching and acting in accord with the Holy Father—unless and until the Holy Father himself declared that the bishop was no longer in communion with the Holy See.

It is not for the faithful to make this latter determination in a general sense. Even when, as may be the case in more than one diocese today, “the faithful have grave cause for complaint,” in the words of Leo XIII, quoted above, and even when we might be allowed “to put the whole matter before the Roman Pontiff,” it would still not devolve upon us to make the determination ourselves that a Catholic bishop had ceased to be a Catholic bishop and to withdraw ourselves from regular parish or sacramental life within a diocese, as some Traditionalists have done. Errors and abuses are assuredly very serious, especially whenever they might actually be sanctioned or tolerated by a bishop, but they certainly do not excuse us from attending the *Novus Ordo* Masses which *have* been lawfully established in all the dioceses of the United States in accordance with the current discipline approved by the bishop of Rome.

It has been necessary to spell out some of these distinctions because so many Catholics have taken the existence of errors and abuses as justifying an exodus into independent chapels. Abuses do not justify disobedience. We have spelled out here the principles of the obedience that is still certainly owed by Catholics to their local ordinary in spite of whatever blemishes might be present in his diocese. What we have said here accords with the principles of obedience to authority laid down by Saint Thomas Aquinas which we have quoted in the reply to Question 8, namely, that we must obey a lawful superior in all those respects in which he is our superior—unless we are obliged to obey a higher power in a different sense.¹⁸ In his *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk*, John Henry Newman brought out the same principles of obedience when he said, in effect, that we must obey a superior in all that which he *has authority to command*.¹⁹

Our bishops are empowered to teach the faith of Christ and to impose Church discipline in accord with the mind of Rome; and where a bishop is doing this we always owe him our assent and obedience. But he does not have any authority to teach, or permit to be taught by those under him, what could in any point be a non-faith or an anti-faith or anything less than the faith, or to impose any discipline upon us contrary to the one approved by the Roman Pontiff. As Saint Paul taught, Church authority has been given for “building up,” not for “destroying” (cf. 2 Cor 10:8).

Archbishop Jerome Hamer, O. P., former Secretary of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, said:

The religious assent of intelligence and will (cf. *Lumen Gentium* no. 25) that the faithful owe to the authentic teaching of their own bishop (teaching in Christ’s name, in the area of faith and morals, in communion with the head of the Church), cannot be expected, far less demanded, for the free opinions that this same bishop would like to propose.²⁰

It is on this whole question that a great deal of confusion has reigned in the post-conciliar period. On the one hand, errors and abuses have sometimes

18 Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, second pt., pt. 2, ques. 104, article 5.

19 See Cardinal John Henry Newman, *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk*, in *Difficulties of Anglicans*, vol. II, (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, Inc., 1969). See especially the chapters on “Divided Allegiance” and “Conscience.”

20 Jerome Hamer, “To Preach the Gospel,” in *L’Osservatore*.

been allowed to parade as if they were the real reforms of Vatican II. On the other hand, Traditionalists have capitalized on these real errors and abuses as a pretext and justification for going back to the Tridentine Mass without the necessary sanction of the hierarchical Church.

Indiscriminate “fighting back against all heresy and infidelity,” as our present question puts it, will not improve the present undesirable situation in the Church. While Catholics may and must uphold truths by whatever means available, Saint Robert Bellarmine’s principle makes it very clear that it is illegitimate for them to “fight” their prelates. They can only “resist” them negatively—assuming a very real cause to do so exists—by “not doing what they command,” not by taking any positive action against them. The latter is the pope’s responsibility. What the laity can best do to help ameliorate the present situation in the Church is to dedicate themselves to that *renewal* of the Church for which the Second Vatican Council in fact called. To paraphrase Chesterton, it is not that the Council has been tried and found wanting; it hasn’t yet been tried. It is high time it was tried after all the false starts of the past few years.

To that subject we must now turn, in the answer to our next question.

Question 24

What, then, can we do in the middle of the “crisis in the Church”?

What we, whether laity, religious, priests, or even bishops, can do in the middle of the “crisis in the Church,” is easy to state but hard to do. It is always hard to get that camel through the eye of that needle!

Let us state in four simple propositions what we can and must do:

1. Keep the faith
2. Follow the pope
3. Find out what the Council really said
4. Do it

“*Keep the Faith.*” No matter what crisis ever overtakes the Church, we must remember that as far as we, individually, are concerned, our goal remains to escape the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, sanctify ourselves with the help of the graces given to us in the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist, and get to heaven. No matter what others may be doing, we still must keep our eyes on *our* goal: it is our responsibility not to “save the Church” but, in the words with which Saint Ignatius of Loyola almost always closed his letters to his Jesuits, to “seek to know God’s most holy will and perfectly fulfill it.”

To the extent that we keep our faith in Christ’s word, mediated to us through the Church, and do it, God will see to it that what we do will *also* be for the good of the Church, in the measure that it is given to us to help the Church. We have a responsibility also to deepen our knowledge of the Catholic faith as taught by the Church’s living Magisterium right down to and including the present. We must meditate on it, even seek a greater and deeper understanding of what it requires of us, and, of course, always defend and spread it to the best of our ability.

It is also good to recall that, although we have been *promised* that in this world we will have “tribulation,” Our Lord and Savior yet bids us to “be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (Jn. 16:33). In Him and His Church we must therefore continue to have *faith*, not because things are going well with the Church, but because He has “overcome.” Those who

cite the current tribulations of the Church as “evidence” that her current rulers have led her away from Christ into error cannot really have very much of the child’s faith that Christ in fact asks of all of us.

“For such is the power of great minds, such the light of truly believing souls,” Pope Saint Leo the Great said back in the fifth century, “that they put unhesitating faith in what is not seen with the bodily eye; they fix their desires on what is beyond sight. Such fidelity could never be born in our hearts, nor could anyone be justified by faith, if our salvation lay only in what was visible.”¹ The Church has only survived down through the ages on the basis of faith such as this.

“*Follow the Pope.*” In the course of this work, the authors have brought forward arguments and evidence showing that the questions about the Church and the Mass, which the Traditionalists started asking in the post-conciliar period, were all mostly answered by the recent popes. The popes explained what they were doing at almost every step of the way for those who had “ears to hear” (Mt. 11:15). But too many were not listening to what the popes said; instead they were listening to other voices giving *their* interpretation of what the popes meant or what the Catholic Tradition supposedly was. A book like this would have been unnecessary if Catholics had been doing what everybody knows Catholics are supposed to do, namely, follow the pope. If we will do that in the future, the kinds of questions we have had to answer here will not even arise.

The advice of Cardinal John Henry Newman given to perplexed Catholics more than a century ago needs to be repeated today:

In the midst of our difficulties I have one ground of hope, just one stay, but I think, a sufficient one, which serves me in the stead of all other argument whatever, which hardens me against criticism, which supports me if I begin to despond, and to which I ever come round, when the question of the possible and the expedient is brought into discussion. It is the decision of the Holy See; Saint Peter has spoken, it is he who has enjoined that which seems to us so unpromising. He has spoken and has a claim on us to trust him. He is no recluse, no solitary

1 Pope Saint Leo the Great, Sermon 74, “On the Lord’s Ascension, II, no. I. Available online at <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/360374.htm>.

student, no dreamer about the past, no doter upon the dead and gone, no projector of the visionary. He for eighteen hundred years has lived in the world; he has seen all fortunes, he has encountered all adversaries, he has shaped himself for all emergencies. If ever there was a power on earth who had an eye for the times, who has confined himself to the practicable, and has been happy in his anticipations, whose words have been facts, and whose commands prophecies, such is he in the history of ages, who sits from generation to generation in the Chair of the Apostles, as the Vicar of Christ, and the Doctor of His Church.

These are not words of rhetoric, gentlemen, but of history. All who take part with the Apostle are on the winning side. He has long since given warrant for the confidence which he claims. From the first he looked through the wide world of which he has the burden; and, according to the need of the day and the inspirations of his Lord, he has set himself now to one thing, now to another; but to all in season, and to nothing in vain.²

“Find Out What the Council Really Said.” Because of the “crisis” which has overtaken the Church in the post-conciliar years, every Catholic now owes it to himself to find out what the Second Vatican Council was really all about. There has been a general council only about once in a century in the history of the Church, and we should assume that through the Council held in our lifetime, the Holy Spirit has not troubled the world for nothing. Every Catholic, especially those of us who are of the laity, should procure a copy of the Council’s documents to read and study and so learn of the special call made to us by the Council.³

For the laity, the Council declared, are “called by God that, being led by the spirit of the Gospel, they may contribute to the sanctification of the world.”⁴ “All of Christ’s followers. . . are invited and bound to pursue

2 Ward, *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman*, vol. II, p. 313.

3 See Flannery, *Vatican Council II*, for the description of the best edition of the Council documents which has come out to date.

4 Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 31.

holiness," the Council further declared.⁵ This means that the laity too are called to further the renewal called for by the Council which Pope Paul termed an inner, personal, moral renewal. The apostolate of lay people is exercised, the Second Vatican Council still further says, "when they work at the evangelization and sanctification of men," an apostolate "which calls for concerted action."⁶

It is this kind of true Catholic action that we must now undertake, nourished by the true voice of the Council. "What the Spirit said to the Church through the Council of our time, what the Spirit says in this Church to all the Churches (cf. Rev 2:2)," Pope John Paul II declared in his first encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* (no. 3)—as we have already had occasion to note (Question 1)—"cannot lead to anything else—in spite of momentary uneasiness—but a still more mature solidity of the whole salvific mission."

"*And Do It.*" The whole People of God, then—with the Catholic laity very much included—must now pursue the authentic renewal of the faith and the apostolate of the evangelization and sanctification of men called for by the Council: "The apostolate of the laity is a sharing of the salvific mission of the Church. Through Baptism and Confirmation all are appointed to this apostolate by the Lord Himself."⁷ By the Lord Himself! This is all the more true because the present crisis of faith, which threatens all Christians living in a post-Christian society, cannot be met successfully until professing Catholics really *live* the faith as the Church preaches and teaches it in her official doctrine and in the acts of her authentic Magisterium. It is already past time for many Catholics in the United States and Canada (not to mention those in other decadent Western societies) to get back to the fundamental need for reconversion to Christ and evangelization of a paganized world.

Such a spiritual transformation in Christ is a necessary pre-condition for restoring internal peace within the Church, for reintegrating our separated brethren into the unity of the Church, and for forming those individual Christians who might again constitute the basis for a new kind of Christian society. The lay apostolate—as the Church has expounded so

5 Ibid, no. 42

6 Second Vatican Council, Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (November 18, 1965) nos. 2, 18. Available online at http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/.

7 Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 33.

clearly in our time—demands the development of the cultivated lay man and woman, i.e., those who have achieved the spiritual and intellectual maturity which John Henry Newman described so beautifully:

I want a laity, not arrogant, not rash in speech, not disputatious, but men who know their religion, who enter into it, who know just where they stand, who know what they hold, and what they do not; who know their creed so well that they can give an account of it, who know so much of history that they can defend it. I want an intelligent, well-instructed laity; I am not denying you are such already, but I mean to be severe, and, as some would say, exorbitant in my demands. I wish you to enlarge your knowledge, to cultivate your reason, to get an insight into the relation of truth to truth, to learn to view things as they are, to understand how faith and reason stand to each other, what are the bases and principles of Catholicism.⁸

The Second Vatican Council's Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity *Apostolicam Actuositatem* envisages exactly this kind of person who will readily undertake his necessary role as "evangelizer" of the modern world.

No one can mistake the earnestness with which the Second Vatican Council has called upon the laity to play their full role in the life and mission of the Church. The tasks are immense—from the task of defending Catholic truth against the current assaults of some even within the Church, to handing down the Catholic faith as parents and primary educators of their children. Again, "the laity are called by God. . . being led by the spirit of the Gospel, so that they can work for the sanctification of the world from within, in the manner of leaven."⁹ Thus the laity are *sent!*

The lay apostolate that is needed will inflame hearts with the love of Christ and zeal for His cause. In keeping the flame of faith alive in our own hearts, there can be no substitute for firm doctrinal instruction for ourselves and our children. Above all, as we have noted already, we must

8 John Henry Cardinal Newman, *Lectures on the Present Position of Catholics in England* (New York and London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1896), p. 390.

9 Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 31.

listen carefully to the voice of the Vicar of Christ who from the indefectible Chair of Peter continues to feed the sheep and lambs of the flock of Christ with those certainties anchored in the revealed Word of God.

We do not need to listen to those voices which are "legion," and which revel in their own personal views; we must not listen to those who attack the pope and the bishops in communion with him, and thus attack our faith. When our obedience to the Holy See or our faith in the validity and doctrinal integrity of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass (as celebrated by priests in communion with that Holy See) is undermined by publications, writings, and authors spreading not only half-truths but even errors, it is spiritually foolhardy to keep drinking such poison.

Are not the words of Cardinal Newman, whom we called upon so often for help in these pages, again very much to the point concerning temptations against faith in our own time?

And so again, when a man has become a Catholic, were he to set about following a doubt which has occurred to him, he has already disbelieved. *I* have not to warn him against losing his faith, he is not merely in danger of losing it, he has lost it; from the nature of the case he has already lost it; he fell from grace at the moment when he deliberately entertained and pursued his doubt. No one can determine to doubt what he is already sure of; but if he is not sure that the Church is from God, he does not believe it. It is not I who forbid him to doubt; he has taken the matter into his own hands when he determined on asking for leave; he has begun, not ended, in unbelief; his very wish, his purpose, is his sin. I do not make it so, it is such from the very state of the case. You sometimes hear, for example, of Catholics falling away, who will tell you it arose from reading the Scriptures, which opened their eyes to the "unscripturalness," so they speak, of the Church of the living God. No; Scripture did not make them disbelieve (impossible); they disbelieved *when* they opened the Bible; they opened it in an unbelieving spirit, and for an unbelieving purpose; they would not have opened it, had they not anticipated—I might say, hoped—that they should find things there inconsistent with Catholic teaching.

Question 24: What, Then, Can We Do?

They begin in self-will and disobedience, and they end in apostasy. This, then, is the direct and obvious reason why the Church cannot allow her children the liberty of doubting the truth of her word.¹⁰

The authors have now reached the end of their arduous labors, and, in doing so, it is sad to reflect how many today might consider the answers to the questions mistaken because we have not been able to ratify the traditionalist position; or how many others might consider the questions themselves not worth bothering about. We, however, prefer the attitude of Father John A. Hardon, S.J., author of *The Catholic Catechism*, who has said that he considers all the labor that goes into the making of a book eminently worth it if he can thereby influence one single reader and confirm his faith. We too have aimed principally to confirm the faith of Catholics that God does not lie. The Church is still the Church and “the gates of hell” will not prevail. We think it fitting to conclude with another quotation of the great Pope Pius XI, who says in a single paragraph much of what we, too, have labored to express:

Every true and lasting reform stems, in the last analysis, from holiness, from men impelled by the fire of love of God and neighbor. By their courageous readiness to hear every one of God’s appeals, and to realize it first in their own lives, they have been in a position, by reason of their humility and the awareness of their vocation, to bring light and renewal to their times. But where reforming zeal has not sprung from personal purity, but was the expression and explosive manifestation of passion, it has disturbed instead of clarifying; destroyed rather than raised up; it has been not seldom the starting point of errors worse than the evils it expected or intended to remedy. Certainly, the Spirit of God breatheth where He will (cf. Jn. 3:8). From the very stones He can raise up those who will prepare the way for his designs (cf. Matt. 3:9. Lk. 3:8). He chooses the instruments of His will according to his

¹⁰ John Henry Cardinal Newman, *Discourses to Mixed Congregations* (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, Inc., 1966), p. 217.

plans and not according to the plans of men. But He who founded the Church and called it into being in the mighty wind of Pentecost will not destroy the bases of that institute of salvation willed by Himself. The one who is moved by the spirit of God has spontaneously the appropriate interior and exterior attitude toward the Church, that sacred fruit on the tree of the Cross, that Pentecostal gift of God's Spirit to a world in need of leadership.¹¹

11 Pope Pius IX, Encyclical *Mit Brennender Sorge*, in O'Gorman, *The Church*, p. 490.

Question 25

Hasn't the post-conciliar experience with the reform of the liturgy shown that the Tridentine Mass is much superior to the New Order of the Mass?

Note to the Revised Edition: The answer to this question was not contained in the original edition but appears here for the first time.

This question was certainly being asked back when this book was originally being written, but we did not provide an answer to it at that time. Re-reading the entire text of the book more than a quarter of a century later, we decided that some mention of the positive benefits of the reform of the liturgy needed to be covered.

We have written at length about abuses and aberrations and their consequences in these pages, and we have defended the Vatican II liturgical reform primarily on the basis that it was mandated by a general council of the Catholic Church, and was duly carried out in accordance with the Church's legitimate authority, namely, by the pope and the Catholic bishops in communion with him. According to the true "Catholic tradition"—so often erroneously invoked by the Traditionalists—it is impossible for any Catholic to disobey the legitimate enactments of these Church authorities and remain a Catholic in the full sense and in good standing.

Like it or not, we now have the New Order of the Mass and the other reformed liturgical books in the Roman Rite. These enactments are now what is popularly called a "done deal." The Church is not going to go back on them; she is only able to move forward from them. Those who desire a restoration of more solemn and sacred elements in the Church's current liturgy and worship will have to look to and rely on the now so often mentioned "reform of the reform" to achieve this goal. There are growing signs today that the idea of such a "reform of the reform" is increasingly catching on.

We also believe, however, that the Church was wise to allow greater opportunities to celebrate the Tridentine Mass by the issuance of *Quattuor Abhinc Annos* and *Ecclesia Dei* (see Appendices V and VI). It is simply a fact that many faithful and fervent Catholics still do prefer the Tridentine Mass; and, although it is not itself a separate "rite" but is an earlier version

of the Roman Rite, it may end up in practice as the equivalent of another “rite” in the Catholic Church.

That would certainly be good news for those who prefer the Tridentine Mass. However, such a preference, in our opinion, does not necessarily prove that the Tridentine Mass is *superior* to the New Order of the Mass, whether in English or Latin. In fact, posing the question in terms of superiority or inferiority is probably not the way to go: the Mass is the Mass! As for the New Order of the Mass, its full potential has not even been properly appropriated, in part *because* of the post-conciliar turmoil. What the “post-conciliar experience” really proves is that numerous mistakes and mis-steps *were* made in the course of carrying out the conciliar mandate to reform the liturgy. But it is yet another mistake to ascribe these errors to the New Order of the Mass itself.

We need to look again briefly at what the Tridentine Mass actually was and represented—its history and nature. Then we need to look with equal brevity at what the Council was aiming at when it mandated a reform of this Tridentine liturgy. Following that, we need to enumerate some of the advantages or positive aspects of the reformed liturgy; finally, we need to look at several texts where Pope John Paul II vigorously defended the liturgical reform, gave the reasons for it, and, indeed, described pretty accurately how it has worked out in practice.

Obscuring many positive benefits of Vatican II’s liturgical renewal is a false stereotype concerning the “Mass of the Ages” or “Immemorial Mass of Tradition” invoked by many Traditionalists. Those, who regard the Tridentine Mass as essentially unchangeable and unchanged from ancient times, the structure of which cannot be altered without introducing novelty, and thereby bringing about a radical break with Catholic tradition, display an ignorance of Church history and, especially, of the history of the liturgy in both West and East. As a result of their seriously mistaken belief in a rigid fixity of the various parts of the Mass, some Traditionalists have been led to decry the New Mass as founded upon heresy. They say it contains heresy, and is “conducive to nothing but heresy and impiety.” Others declare a profound repugnance to the New Order of the Mass as representing “another religion.” Such extremists have not even hesitated to say that the Roman liturgy has been “destroyed.”

Those who think that the Tridentine form of the Mass, as enshrined in the 1962 Roman Missal, is exactly the same form of the Mass that has always been celebrated in the Latin Church would perhaps be surprised to learn that:

Question 25: The Post-Conciliar Experience and the Tridentine Mass

1) The Mass celebrated by the Roman Church until the fourth century was not in Latin, but rather in Greek; Saints Peter and Paul did not celebrate the Mass in Latin.

2) The *Te Igitur*, *Secret*, *Gloria*, and the recitation of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (the *Credo*) were not found in the Masses celebrated in the earliest centuries. The Canon of the Mass was not fixed until the fourth century. The collects before the Lesson, over the oblation, and after the communion, date in their original Roman form from the late fifth to the eighth centuries. Pope Gregory the Great (590–604) was responsible for the introduction and the singing of the *Kyrie* in the Mass as well as changing the place of the Our Father at the end of the Canon of the Mass. The same pope arranged that the Kiss of Peace would follow immediately after the *Pater Noster*. The *Agnus Dei* was introduced into the Mass by Pope Sergius I (about 700). The *Supplices* prayer appears to be a truncated version of an earlier and more developed *epiclesis* (invocation of the Holy Spirit for the transubstantiation of the elements of bread and wine). Only in 1014 AD did Pope Benedict VIII introduce the famous *Filioque* clause (“the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son”) into the Creed of the Roman Church. In the same eleventh century there was introduced the genuflection at the *Et incarnatus est* in the Creed. In the twelfth century priests began to elevate the Host for the adoration of the people.

3) It must be recalled that for some centuries there were also non-Roman forms of liturgy active in the Western Church (fourth–eighth centuries) and primarily in Gaul (modern France), where the Gallican rite with its dramatic elements and prolix prayers (reminiscent of Eastern and Celtic influences) spread. A great authority on the Roman Liturgy before the changes sought by Vatican II was Father Adrian Fortescue, whom we have quoted before. He noted that it was only by the tenth or eleventh century that the more sober and terse Roman Rite was able to drive out the Gallican liturgy to become alone used throughout the West (except in two sees, the Ambrosian rite in Milan, and the Mozarabic rite in Toledo). Nevertheless, he took care to observe that:

In the long and gradual supplanting of the Gallican rite, the Roman was itself affected by its rival, so that when at last it emerges as sole possessor it is no longer the old pure

Roman Rite, but has become the gallicanized Roman use that we now follow. These Gallican additions are all of the nature of ceremonial ornament, symbolic practices, ritual adornment. Our blessings of candles, ashes, palms, much of the ritual of Holy Week, sequences and so on, are Gallican additions. The original Roman Rite was very plain, simple, practical.¹

4) What would eventually become known as the “Tridentine Mass” (the form of the Roman liturgy retaining certain Gallican additions) that came to be celebrated in the Latin Church for 400 years was a product comprising many developments. It was imposed upon bishops and priests by Pope Pius V’s issuance of his Roman Missal of 1570.² It is little known, however, that despite Saint Pius V’s *Quo Primum*, from the seventeenth century on, there developed an appreciable amount of liturgical diversity in the dioceses of France which had their own liturgical Missals and other books. When Napoleon forced the re-organization of the number of French dioceses, there occurred considerable liturgical chaos on the practical level. The growth of a movement led by the great nineteenth century French Benedictine theologian and liturgist Dom Prosper Gueranger, for “some form of order and unity” through a desired uniform adoption of the Roman liturgy, eventually led the bishops and “the dioceses of France to abandon their liturgical books in favor of the Roman liturgical books.” This ended a certain liturgical pluralism in the Church in France which the popes had tolerated, and which, ironically, has again emerged as a result of the liturgical reforms of Vatican II.³

5) So the fact remains that the “unchangeable Tridentine Mass of 1570,” with its distinctive prayers and ceremonial ritual, was a far cry from the Roman Mass as it was celebrated, for example, in the sixth century. As the great medievalist historian and former Regius professor emeritus of Modern History at Cambridge, David Knowles, observed (while candidly noting some “small changes and displacements, not always for the better”):

1 See Fortescue, “Liturgy,” in *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. IX. Also available online at www.NewAdvent.com.

2 See the full text of *Quo Primum* in Appendix III.

3 See Cuthbert Johnson, O. S. B., “Prosper Gueranger (1805-1875), A Liturgical Theologian: An Introduction to His Liturgical Writings and Work” (Rome: *Anacleta Liturgica* 9, 1984), p. 242.

The recent reforms, besides the important changes into the vernacular, have eliminated many of the medieval additions, and the framework of the Roman Mass has been almost completely restored to that of the Roman Church in the 6th century. Much of this, long desired by liturgical scholars, and directed by the documents of Vatican II, has met with general approval. Thus, for example, the last gospel, magnificent in itself, had no relation to the eucharistic liturgy, and the psalm *Judica* and long *Confiteor*, originally preparatory prayers, were too often mangled by both priests and ministers, and inaudible to the congregation. Other changes of form secured the integration of all the assistants, both clergy and layfolk, into a single body of the people of God at worship and communion . . . Approval of the accuracy and style of the translations has been less than warm. [However], it is probably true to say that the casual and the normally devout but not liturgically-minded assistant at Mass, whether in Latin or English, would not observe a notable difference between new and old.⁴

Thus, the Tridentine Mass was far from being the unchangeable “Mass of all time” that Traditionalists often speak of. On the contrary, there have been many changes down through the centuries. In acknowledging the work and insights of liturgical scholars extending over a century, as well as assessing the contemporary needs of the faithful, the Second Vatican Council in its Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* noted that “the liturgy is made up of unchangeable elements divinely instituted and of elements subject to change” (no. 21). Thus “in order that the Christian people may more certainly derive an abundance of graces from the sacred liturgy”⁵ the Council called for the “restoration” of:

- . . . texts and rites . . . so that they express more clearly the holy things which they signify. Christian people, as far as possible, should be enabled to understand them with ease and to take part in them fully, actively, and as befits a community (no. 21).

4 David Knowles, *The Sacrifice of the Mass* (London: Faith Pamphlet, 1973).

5 Vatican Council II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 21.

- [That is why] the rites should be distinguished by a noble simplicity; they should be short, clear, and unencumbered by useless repetitions; they should be within people's powers of comprehension, and normally should not require much explanation (no. 34).
- The rite of the Mass is to be revised in such a way that the intrinsic nature and purpose of its several parts, as also the connection between them, can be more clearly manifested, and that devout and active participation by the faithful can be more easily accomplished (no. 50).
- For this purpose the rites are to be simplified, while due care is taken to preserve their substance. Elements which, with the passage of time, came to be duplicated, or were added with but little advantage, are now to be discarded; other elements which have suffered injury through accidents of history are now to be restored to the vigor which they had in the days of the Holy Fathers, as may seem useful or necessary (no. 50).

Thus did Vatican II decree that the Mass was to be changed in the ways indicated. It should be clear that the *Ordo Missae* of Paul VI, which has been so maligned and calumniated by Traditionalists as “an offense against the worship of God,” remains essentially what it always was in its doctrinal substance and structure. Whatever shortcomings it may have—impoverished translation, lesser signs of external reverence, and poor celebration in the vernacular by priests enamored with their own histrionics, verbosity, and so-called “creativity”—the official Latin texts of *Ordo Missae* still constitute a valid liturgy for the worship of God. The reformed Mass retains the peculiar genius of the Roman Rite in its simplicity, sobriety, and terseness as the expression of a rich classical culture that was both interior and reserved, and was largely formed by the early great persecutions, just as it was further embellished by medieval piety as time passed.

Moreover, the present New Order of the Mass possesses certain positive features which restore or advance that active participation in the liturgy which the popes have continually urged. Well before Vatican II, Pope Pius XI (1922–39), for example, declared that “the faithful [should] attend the sacred ceremonies not as if they were outsiders or mute

onlookers, but let them attend the beauty of the liturgy and take part in the sacred ceremonies, alternating their voices with the priest and the choir, according to the prescribed norms.”⁶

Vatican II picked up on this theme in a major way. The desired active participation of the people (both external in voice and song, and above all, interior—that of mind and heart) has been rendered possible by the New Order of the Mass, and it has brought out several other advantages or positive aspects as well:

1) Use of the vernacular, which enables the congregation to follow and understand the actions of the priest at the altar, as well as the meaning of the prayers surrounding the sacred sacrificial action of Christ in the Mass. An all-Latin liturgy was, frankly, unintelligible for millions of the faithful who did not have bilingual missals or, for lack of proper catechesis, often did not know what was happening.

2) Greater access of the faithful to the riches of Holy Scripture proclaimed or sung in their own language, along with the restoration of the three scriptural readings at Sunday Mass, as in the early Church.

3) The people joining in active responses to the prayers or greetings by the priest, as in the Prayers of the Faithful after the Homily. The Prayer of the Faithful, or the General Intercessions, constitutes another restoration of an ancient practice wherein the people are given another opportunity to exercise their common priesthood as baptized persons.

4) Contrary to the practice in the Tridentine Mass, the people themselves vocally confess their sins in the Penitential Rite. They join in to recite or sing the Responsorial Psalm, and they recite or sing together with the priest the *Credo* and the Our Father.

5) The people also recite or sing other fixed parts of the Ordinary of the Mass: the *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Sanctus*, *Benedictus*, and *Agnus Dei*. Vatican II’s *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (no. 54) even declares: “Care must be taken to ensure that the faithful may also be able to say or sing together in Latin those parts of the Ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them.” The possibilities of a sung Latin-English Mass by priest and people are finally becoming normative in some parishes (thereby manifesting an impressive continuity with the Latin liturgical tradition). As Pope John Paul II told American bishops:

⁶ Pope Pius XI, Apostolic Constitution on Divine Worship *Divini Cultus* (December 20, 1928). Available online at <http://www.adoremus.org/DiviniCultus.html>.

The use of the vernacular has certainly opened up the treasures of the liturgy to all who take part, but this does not mean that the Latin language, and especially the chants which are so superbly adapted to the genius of the Roman Rite, should be wholly abandoned. If subconscious experience is ignored in worship, an affective and devotional vacuum is created and the liturgy can become not only too verbal but also too cerebral. Yet the Roman Rite is again distinctive in the balance it strikes between a sparseness and a richness of emotion: it feeds the heart and the mind, the body and the soul.⁷

6) With the Mass containing twenty-four new Prefaces (beautifully evoking our thanksgiving for the Paschal Mystery), and new Eucharistic Prayers (Canon of the Mass), such Prefaces and Eucharistic Prayers no longer need to be recited in Latin in silence, but can now be recited or chanted aloud in the vernacular (or in Latin); and thereby the faithful's understanding of their rich theology becomes greatly facilitated.

7) The new Eucharistic Prayers (II, III, IV), quite in keeping with the sobriety characteristic of the Roman Rite, introduce into the present Roman liturgy echoes of the splendid *Anaphoras* (or Canons) of the Eastern and Western Gallican liturgies which highlight the role of the Holy Spirit in the sanctification of the faithful. The liturgy of the Roman Church, *mater et magistra* ("mother and teacher" of all the churches), has thereby been enriched with *epicleses* (invocations of the Holy Spirit over the gifts brought to the altar) that highlight and explicate the role of the Holy Spirit in the transubstantiation of the elements of bread and wine, a doctrine especially cherished by the Eastern Churches. The new Eucharistic Prayers also emphasize the faithful's need to persevere in the virtues of faith and hope in order to achieve our supernatural destiny, the face-to-face vision of God in heaven.

8) The catechetical value of the new Eucharistic Prayers has never been sufficiently noted. The English scholar Fr. Roger Nesbitt, for example, observed:

7 Pope John Paul II, "Address on the Liturgy to U. S. Bishops of the Northwest on their *ad limina* Visit" (October 9, 1998).

Whilst all of the new Eucharistic Prayers have added further doctrinal richness to the [Roman] liturgy, there is little doubt that, from the catechetical point of view, Eucharistic Prayer IV is an immense gain. In this one prayer from the beginning of its preface the whole of God's plan of salvation is set forth succinctly (and re-enacted in the consecration) with an economy of language and a breadth of vision: There is the transcendence of God, the Lord of all creation, the angels, the creation of man, original sin, the preparation for Christ through the Old Covenant and the prophets, the Incarnation, the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, the sending of the Holy Spirit, His invocation over the gifts, the Mass as a true sacrifice, the Real Presence of Christ the Head and the Source of all Life in the Mystical Body His Church united through the Pope, the local Bishop and clergy, Our Lady and the communion of saints, and finally the conquering of original sin and its effects in the kingdom of heaven which is to come. A whole course on the Catholic faith could be centered on Eucharistic Prayer IV alone.⁸

9) The doctrinal enrichment of the Roman Missal is also particularly evident with regard to the "Collection of Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary" published in 1986 to facilitate liturgical celebrations in honor of the Mother of God and made available to priests and congregations of the entire Roman Rite. In a remarkable paper, "Mary as Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate in the Contemporary Roman Liturgy," the noted Mariologist Msgr. Arthur B. Calkins noted that:

The development and approval of the Masses in the Collection have a definite magisterial value. . . . The Mass formularies of the present Roman liturgy testify strongly to the Church's belief in Mary's role as Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate for the People of God. . . . These marvelous prayers of the Church militant are meant to draw her children ever more securely into

8 "The Liturgy: A Catechism of Catholic Doctrine," *Faith Pamphlet* (London, 1974).

the worship of the Church triumphant in union with Mary, her Mother. ⁹

More could be stated with respect to the theological enrichment of the *Novus Ordo Missae* and other parts of the Roman Missal, but the above considerations should suffice to reply to those who have allowed themselves to be influenced by traditionalist rhetoric to the effect that the Vatican II's liturgical reform of the Roman Missal has led to a "Protestantization" of the Catholic faith, or to a "new religion" instigated by "heretical popes" deviating from the Catholic tradition.

Fortunately, faithful Catholics can now also look forward to a new and more accurate and sacral translation of the Order of the Mass (as well as other liturgical books). This new translation is assured to be in conformity with the noble and majestic stylistic Latin of the original texts. In the recent Instruction *Liturgiam Authenticam* ("On the Use of Vernacular Languages in the Publication of the Books of the Roman Liturgy," dated March 28, 2001), the Church has moved decisively to correct lapses in translation and to assure "the preparation of liturgical books marked by sound doctrine, which are exact in wording, free from all ideological influence, and otherwise endowed with those qualities by which the sacred mysteries of salvation and the indefectible faith of the Church are efficaciously transmitted by means of human language in prayer, and worthy worship is offered to God the Most High."¹⁰

It is also evident that, as of this writing, the Pope and bishops of the Church are moving collegially to exercise greater liturgical discipline in order to remove the liturgical abuses and aberrations which have given occasion to Traditionalists to justify their rejection of an ecumenical council of the Catholic Church and their "resistance to his face" of the Vicar of Christ, who alone is charged by the Lord of history to make use of the Keys of the Kingdom in directing the fortunes of the Church in the Third Millennium of Christianity.

In concluding this answer to the Question of whether the Tridentine Mass is superior to the New Order of the Mass, we may cite several instances where Pope John Paul II thoroughly explained the rationale for the Church's revision

⁹ See Mark L. Miravalle, S.T.D., (ed.) *Mary, Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate: Theological Formulations* (Santa Barbara, CA: Queenship Publishing, 1995), p. 113.

¹⁰ Instruction *Liturgiam Authenticam*, "On the Use of Vernacular Languages in the Publication of the Books of the Roman Liturgy" (March 28, 2001), no. 3.

of the liturgy—it is not that explanations have not been made; it is just that, too often, the explanations were not heeded. On May 3, 1996, Pope John Paul II delivered an Address to the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments setting forth his basic thought on the reforms in the Church's Liturgy:

The purpose of all that was done for the liturgical life, both before the Second Vatican Council and in the period of the Council sessions and then during the liturgical reform stemming from it as its authorized application, was to facilitate the assimilation of the "spirit of the liturgy," and, on this basis, the understanding of the proper and essential value of liturgical actions. It was obvious that the spirit of the liturgy could not be restored by means of a mere *reform*. A true, profound liturgical *renewal* was necessary. In fact a "spirit" intrinsically linked with liturgical "actions" can reside only in the "human agents" of the liturgy, who are called to "exercise Christ's priestly office." However, this does not mean that one should neglect the forms in which Christ's priesthood is expressed and exercised, those "outward signs" which the liturgy must take into consideration.

The Second Vatican Council responded to the expectations of the people of our time, calling believers, as I mentioned in the Apostolic Letter *Orientalis Lumen*, "to show in word and deed today the immense riches that our Churches preserve in the coffers of their traditions" (n. 4; AAS, 87, 1995, 748). One of these "coffers" is certainly the *Missale Romanum*, whose *tertia editio typica* you are preparing. In it the *lex orandi* [law of prayer] has preserved, for the Roman Rite, the faith experience of entire generations, together with many characteristic features of cultures that have been gradually transformed into Christian civilizations.

The liturgical reform has sought to put into practice on a broader scale and in different ways according to the times and needs, what had already happened in other periods of the Church's history, as for example, in the extraordinary

pastoral undertaking of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, since “revelation is proclaimed satisfactorily and becomes fully understandable when Christ speaks the tongues of the various peoples, and they can read Scripture and sing the liturgy in their own language with their own expressions” (*Oriente Lumen*, n. 7; *loc. Cit.*, 751).¹¹

Earlier, in a 1990 address to the bishops of Brazil, the Pope had entered into greater detail concerning the “necessity of continuing to increase liturgical training [of priests] and a sense of prayer among the faithful.” As in other addresses to the faithful, he took the occasion to mark the specific theocentric and Christocentric nature of Catholic liturgy; he noted that:

Legitimate and necessary concern for current realities of concrete life of persons cannot make us forget the true nature of liturgical actions. It is clear that the Mass is something more than a feast of fraternal unity; it is much more than a meal among friends or a free supper for the poor. Nor is it a time for “celebrating” human dignity, and purely earthly accomplishments and hopes. It is the Sacrifice which makes Christ really present in the Sacrament. . . . The Liturgy is the authentic *expression of the universal Church’s faith* when it gives worship to God, in sanctifying and edifying the faithful. It is an activity which is directed towards the supernatural, and faith is the primary element in our supernatural life. This means that the Creed must always be at the foundation of the Liturgy, as a profession of faith which is deeply felt, lived out, sung, and prayed.

It is faith which unites Christians to the Church. The first condition for having liturgy is that worship be true and objective, taking into account and giving room for the nature of God and the nature of man, with relationships summed up by Christ himself when he said: “You shall adore the Lord your God and him alone shall you worship” (Mt. 4:10).

11 Pope John Paul II, “To participants in the Plenary of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments” (May 3, 1996). Available in Italian at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1996/may/index_en.htm.

Question 25: The Post-Conciliar Experience and the Tridentine Mass

The Liturgy can be said, in a certain way, to be the *theology of the Christian people*, which—as in former times the disciples of Jesus did—continues to ask its pastors: “Teach us to pray” (cf. Lk. 11:1). We must be *teachers of prayer* in our particular Churches. For them we are first liturgists. . . . As Bishops we are primarily responsible for *making sure that the faithful people pray*, we are the prime custodians of the purity and the nobility of the celebrations, towards a worthy and fervid liturgy.

In the same address to Brazilian bishops, the Pope noted the Church’s intent to encourage a more communal participation of the faithful in the Mass. There was a need to overcome an exaggerated rubricism, formalism, and clericalism, which had impeded the laity’s full liturgical participation, as well as to foster a greater appreciation of the Mass’s theological richness:

What did the renewal envisioned by *Sacrosanctum Concilium* bring to the Church? It brought her above all a *new concept of liturgy*. Previously people had an idea of the liturgy which regularly did not go beyond external aspects: ceremonies, rubrics, and norms for properly carrying out liturgical actions. While those aspects are also worthy of respect, the Constitution told us that the liturgy is something more. In it we find the very action of Christ the Priest, an action in which he associates his very self with the Church. That is, the action of the Head and the members (SC, no. 7). To celebrate the Mass, the Sacraments, the Liturgy of the Hours is to make present and actual the action of Jesus Christ the Priest, brought about in his *Paschal mystery*. “Thus the Liturgy becomes the privileged ‘place’ of meeting between Christians and God, and with him whom God sent, Jesus Christ” (*Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, 7).

Placing the liturgy in the context of *salvation history made present in the Church*, the Council not only recognizes its eminent role in the life of the Church, but also appeals to the responsibility of Christians; all of them

are called to integrate the liturgical actions into their lives. Throughout the entire Constitution the *Leitmotif* is *participation*. Liturgy is not assisting at an action which others carry out; it is celebrating something, or better, Someone. And in that celebration all are and must be involved; all people and every person, in his or her own way, has to take an active and conscious part.

This *new concept of liturgy* brought many fruits to the life of the post-conciliar Church. As you know, it led to a deeper theological consideration of Christian worship, it helped to overcome formalism, and reduced the distance between clergy and people during the celebrations—encouraging initiatives in favor of active and personal participation, freeing the Christian from the role of mere “spectator” and leading the Christian forward towards unity with God and his brothers and sisters (cf. SC, no. 26). Persons, who, previously, were content with merely fulfilling their *Sunday Mass* obligation, felt themselves included in the new style of celebration through its words and actions; and they discovered that they, too, ultimately have a role to play in the Christian community (cf. SC, no. 26).

The celebration of certain *Sacraments*, in the light of the new texts (consider Baptism and Matrimony) have often presented problems regarding spiritual requirements, truth, and moral consistency; they have become the occasion for many Christians to become aware of their personal responsibilities. The realization that the prayer of the Church is the prayer of everyone has led to the result that the Liturgy of the Hours is no longer the domain of only priests and religious and truly becomes the prayer of all God’s People, of the Church which is at prayer (General Introduction to the Liturgy of the Hours, nos. 1 and 20).

In applying *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, there have certainly been *deficiencies, hesitations, and abuses*. But it cannot be denied that, where communities were prepared for it through proper information and catechesis, the results were positive. Rightly, it was affirmed in the

most recent Extraordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops that “the liturgical reform is the most visible fruit of all the Council’s work.”¹²

Finally in two major apostolic letters, “On the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Liturgy Constitution” (*Vincemus Quintus Annus*, December 8, 1988) and “On the 40th Anniversary of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*” (December 4, 2003), Pope John Paul II noted some of the positive results stemming from the reform of the Roman liturgy as desired by Vatican II and implemented in the post-conciliar documents issued by the Holy See. In the former of these two documents, Pope John Paul II observed that:

The vast majority of the pastors and the Christian people have accepted the liturgical reform in a spirit of obedience and indeed joyful fervor. For this we should give thanks that the table of the word of God is now abundantly furnished for all; for the immense effort undertaken throughout the world to provide the Christian people with translations of the Bible, the Missal, and other liturgical books; for the increased participation of the faithful by prayer and song, gesture and silence, in the Eucharist and other sacraments; for the ministries exercised by lay people and the responsibilities that they have assumed in virtue of the common priesthood into which they have been initiated through baptism and confirmation; for the radiant vitality of so many Christian communities, a vitality drawn from the wellspring of the liturgy. These are all reasons for holding fast to the teaching of the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and to the reforms which it has made possible: “The liturgical renewal is the most visible fruit of the whole work of the Council.”¹³

12 Pope John Paul II, “Address to the Bishops of Brazil on their *ad limina* Visit” in *L’Osservatore Romano* (English Edition, April 9, 1990, emphasis in the original).

13 Pope John Paul II, “Final Report of the Extraordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops” (December 7, 1985).

Afterwords

The Lefebvre Schism

For the epigraph on our title page we long ago turned to the Prophet Isaiah: “Remove every obstruction from my people’s way” (Is. 57:14). Looking back on more than a quarter of a century since this book was first written in order to help Catholics deal with the changes that accompanied the Second Vatican Council’s decision to mandate a reform of the liturgy of the Roman Rite, we are sometimes tempted to turn back to Isaiah once more. In view of the “troubles” in the Catholic Church that have unfortunately characterized the post-conciliar years in so many ways—some of which are with us still—we sometimes wonder whether another text of the prophet does not still quite aptly describe how many Catholics now inevitably feel about the state of the Church:

Our holy and beautiful house,
 where our fathers praised thee,
has been burned by fire,
 and all our pleasant places have
 become ruins.

Wilt thou restrain thyself at these
 things, O Lord?

Wilt thou keep silent, and afflict
 us sorely? (Is. 64: 11–12)

We are sometimes tempted, we say, to adopt this outlook, as many Traditionalists, or those inclined towards traditionalism, have also, evidently, been tempted to do. Many of them have been more than tempted, in fact; they have quite simply adopted this outlook, and have even concluded, in some cases, that the cause is lost, the Council was a mistake, and the post-conciliar popes too have been mistaken in using their unique authority to try to implement the decisions of such a botched and flawed Council.

It is, of course, always possible to take this viewpoint. There are even some facts and arguments that can be adduced in support of it, if one wishes to dwell indefinitely on some of the mistakes and the “horror stories” that have abounded in the post-conciliar era, as if these things were the only results of the Council. Upon reflection, however, it is short-

sighted to dwell only upon all the things that have gone wrong—or at least have not gone exactly right. Looking back in the pages of this book, what we have demonstrated with the facts, arguments, and citations from official Church documents that we have been able to bring forward is that the cause is *not* lost; nor were the Council and the post-conciliar hopes mistaken. The Church has already, as a matter of fact, basically *surmounted* the crisis of faith and practice that indeed came upon her in the post-conciliar era. It's over. Neither the dissenters, nor the do-it-yourself liturgical abusers—nor, indeed, the Traditionalists, for that matter—are going to prevail. The official, hierarchical Church has already prevailed—just as Christ no doubt foresaw when he founded the Church on Peter and the apostles in the first place.

The successors of the apostles in our day may have sometimes proved to be limited, short-sighted, bumbling, and even very fallible in facing up to the formidable challenges they were confronted with, from dissenters and modernizers within the Church, as well as from secularists without. They have not only not succeeded in facing such people down; they have not succeeded in facing down the Traditionalists either! In their limitations, the members of the hierarchy have no doubt even sometimes come to resemble the original apostles: “And they all forsook him, and fled” (Mk. 14:50).

Nevertheless, the facts show that the Church is still the Church, in spite of the many efforts made over the last forty years since Vatican II to transform her into something different from what she was when she issued from the heart of her divine Founder on the Cross; and what she has steadily continued to be down through the centuries and up to our own day. Some Catholic bishops may have been greatly influenced by contemporary trends, and may have imagined, sincerely, that the Church had to “adapt.” In the end, though—especially through the actions of the Holy See—the Church has continued to articulate and uphold her official positions, and, it turns out, they are the correct positions.

In short, the Church has been affected, but she has not been essentially changed by the upheavals and turmoil that have characterized the post-conciliar era. At this point, we are close to being back to normal, with the Holy See not only effectively in charge, but possessing a generally very clear-eyed understanding of what the problems are that the Church continues to face. The bishops have not always shown the same understanding, but what they have shown pretty consistently is that they will generally follow

Rome's lead when Rome does lead. Catholic bishops understand very well that "the college or body of bishops has . . . no authority unless united with the Roman Pontiff, Peter's successor, as its head."¹

As for the Council, it remains an effective guidepost to help steer the Church into the new century—and the new millennium. Over and over in these pages, we have shown that properly interpreted, the Council—which according to traditional Catholic belief enjoys the guarantee of the Holy Spirit in its formal acts and decisions—has not been in the wrong and "responsible," as some wrongly believe, for the post-conciliar troubles. On the contrary, what the Council decided was essentially right, and the real problem has been that the real Council has not always been followed as it should have been.

And in this regard—that is assenting to and following the teachings and directives of the Council—the Traditionalists have not only been no better than the dissenters and radical modernizers "on the left"; they have actually done *more* harm to the Church than the latter. Oblivious to what Saint Athanasius emphasized long ago apropos of the Council of Nicaea, namely, that the acts and decisions of an ecumenical council represent for Catholics "the word of the Lord," the Traditionalists have instead adopted a very untraditional standpoint, namely, that an ecumenical council of the Church could be, and, indeed *was*, simply wrong. The popes were equally mistaken in attempting to implement Vatican II, according to this mistaken traditionalist view.

It was as a result of these negative traditionalist judgments that the only formal schism to follow Vatican II has been that of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre and his followers in the Saint Pius X Society. That is why we say that the Traditionalists have done more harm to the Church of Christ than the dissenters and radical modernizers. Formal schism is a much more serious matter than mere aberrations and abuses. History shows that formal schisms can hang on for centuries—to the detriment of the Church and of the salvation of souls. We can only deplore in the strongest terms those who have succumbed to the temptation to follow Archbishop Lefebvre, after the latter demonstrated his total unwillingness to follow what "the Catholic tradition," rightly understood, required of him, namely, that he should submit to, and obey, the judgments of the pope. We pray that God will have mercy on his soul and pardon him for

1 Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 22.

the many souls that he has led astray—and is leading astray, so long as the Society he founded carries on as a schismatical body.

To complete the story, we must recount here, briefly, the sad facts about how the Lefebvre schism came about. This schism became effective on June 30, 1988, when Archbishop Lefebvre illicitly ordained four bishops in Ecône, Switzerland, in open defiance of an express prohibition and warning from the Holy See. As a result, both the archbishop and the four bishops he ordained were immediately and automatically excommunicated. As the Vatican press office declared at the time:

According to Canon 1013, the consecration of bishops on June 30 by Monsignor Lefebvre, in spite of the admonition on June 17, has been carried out explicitly against the pope's will; this is a formally schismatic act according to Canon 751, inasmuch as he openly refused submission to the Holy Father and communion with the members of the Church under his jurisdiction (see also Appendix VI).

Coming as it did nearly a quarter of a century after the end of the Council, this formalization of the Lefebvre Schism had actually been a long time in developing. That it was inevitably going to come, however, had been pretty evident for quite awhile, in spite of extraordinary efforts exerted by the Holy See to avert it. The root causes of the schism are found in Archbishop Lefebvre's participation at the Council, which he attended as superior general of the Holy Ghost Fathers, a position to which he had been elected in 1962. Prior to that he had for many years been a missionary priest and bishop in Africa, where he had eventually become archbishop of Dakar.

At the Council, Archbishop Lefebvre became part of a conservative bloc called the International Group of Fathers, which generally tried to modify and even counter some of the initiatives of the generally dominant liberal bloc of bishops from northern Europe. Among the trends opposed by his International Group were the pronounced conciliar thrusts in favor of religious liberty and ecumenism and towards greater "collegiality" (or cooperation) among the bishops. Vatican II ended up strongly emphasizing all three of these subjects in the various documents it issued. In the eyes of Archbishop Lefebvre, however, religious liberty, ecumenism, and

collegiality all represented distinct errors for the Church. He equated them with the “liberty, equality, and fraternity” of the French Revolution, which had so strongly persecuted the Church. Later, he even declared explicitly that “Vatican II is the 1789 in the Church.”

Another effort identified with the International Group of Fathers was the attempt to try to secure a strong statement by the Council against Communism. In this the International Group did not succeed, at least to the satisfaction of its members, who had to be satisfied with the strong sections against atheism in the Council’s Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes* (nos. 19-21). Such a failure to get more conservative and traditional ideas and schemas approved by the Council no doubt contributed to Archbishop Lefebvre’s growing disillusionment with the whole conciliar process. Later on, he would typically denounce what he came to call “conciliar Rome.”

Although he took part in the conciliar process throughout the entire Council, and even ended up signing fourteen of the sixteen Vatican II documents—including the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy and the Declaration on Religious Liberty—Archbishop Lefebvre’s growing disenchantment with the Council was reflected in his eventual determination to set his face firmly against the Council and its works. He acted henceforth as if it were Marcel Lefebvre’s mission in life to save the Church from the damage being self-inflicted upon her, as he saw it, by and as a result of Vatican II.

In 1968, he had a falling out with his religious order, the Holy Ghost Fathers, which he had continued to govern up to that point. This falling out came at a meeting of the order on the implementation of the Council. After walking out of that meeting, the archbishop effectively left the order. In 1969, he went to Ecône, Switzerland, where he founded the Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX) and opened a seminary to train priests in what he and his followers would claim was the true “Catholic tradition”—which, according to them, had been betrayed by the Council.

“This is an operation of survival for tradition.” Archbishop Lefebvre later said, at the time of his illicit ordination of the four bishops in 1988. “They are in the process of destroying the Church. . . . It is to show our attachment to the Rome of forever that we perform this ceremony. . . . We will be thanked one day by the bishops of Rome for having maintained the traditions of the Church.”

The “Catholic tradition,” in the view of Archbishop Lefebvre and the SSPX, quite naturally included the Mass and other rites as they had been celebrated in the Church prior to the Vatican II liturgical reforms. Archbishop Lefebvre and the SSPX thus came to be primarily identified in the public mind with their adherence to the Latin Tridentine Mass, although their revolt against the Church extended far beyond liturgical matters—and extended, especially, to the rejection of Vatican Council II’s Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, and the Council’s Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*.

The Lefebvrites were not the only ones who insisted upon retaining the Latin Tridentine Mass. Other groups of Catholics, reacting adversely to the post-conciliar changes, here and there broke away from obedience to the hierarchical Church and continued to celebrate “motel Masses” or other independent Masses in separate churches or chapels. These groups often hired, Protestant-style, their own “loyalist” priests. In one notorious case, a so-called Saint Athanasius Chapel in Virginia long employed the services of a “traditionalist priest” who turned out never to have been ordained at all; he was only masquerading as a priest.

The Catholic Traditionalist Movement (CTM) in New York was another organization which very early began offering Tridentine Masses, including a popular broadcast Mass offered over radio and TV; the CTM has continued to the present day. Yet other groups, in various places, some of them ephemeral, have also, defiantly, held out against the “tyranny” of Vatican II and its unwelcome changes. There are even groups of so-called “sedevacantists,” who hold that there has been no valid pope since the death of Pope Pius XII. For them the See of Peter has been “vacant” since then, and the popes subsequently elected have “betrayed” the Catholic tradition.

From time to time, even now, other traditionalist organizations emerge to announce that they, not the hierarchical Church, represent the true Catholic tradition. A number of mostly polemical, traditionalist books and publications have continued to appear, and, it seems, even to flourish. And, occasionally, yet another new traditionalist publication is launched. Accurate numbers of how many Catholics belong to these groups, thus separating themselves from the Church by regular attendance at illicit Tridentine Masses, are hard to come by.

One notable case of a traditionalist grouping that rivaled the Lefebvrite Schism was that of Bishop Antonio de Castro Mayer of Campos, Brazil.

An ally of Archbishop Lefebvre during the Council, Bishop de Castro Mayer spoke out against the evils brought about by the modern media, against religious liberty, and against the vernacular Mass, and in favor of condemning Communism by name. In one intervention he deplored the absence of any reference, in the schema that became *Gaudium et Spes*, to the Devil, “who nevertheless exists,” the Brazilian bishop noted. (In the end, a reference to “the powers of evil” was added to the final version of the document (GS no. 37), along with a footnote referring to one of the Gospel passages where Christ himself affirms the existence of the Devil. Similarly, both *Lumen Gentium* (no. 16) and *Ad Gentes* (no. 9), make reference to, and assume the existence of, the Devil).

Following the Council, in 1969, Bishop de Castro Mayer, fatefully, refused to implement the liturgical reforms called for by *Sacrosanctum Concilium*; in his diocese the Tridentine Mass continued to be celebrated. Although not formally affiliated with Archbishop Lefebvre’s movement, he regularly supported the latter. Meanwhile, he himself managed to maintain his own “traditionalist” diocese in the face of steady pressures from Rome for more than a decade, until he was finally forced into retirement in 1981. In that year, his successor at long last instituted the New Order of the Mass in Campos, but considerable numbers of Catholics still remained loyal to the outgoing bishop, and Tridentine Masses were then organized quite widely outside the actual churches of the diocese.

Bishop de Castro Mayer himself had steadily continued to favor the traditionalist cause, and was present, for example, at the illicit ordination of Archbishop Lefebvre’s four bishops—for which he too was excommunicated (see Appendix VI). When Archbishop Lefebvre died in 1991, the four SSPX bishops ordained by him duly but, of course, illicitly ordained a traditionalist “successor” to him.

Thus, Archbishop Lefebvre and his Society of Saint Pius X were never the only schismatic Traditionalists in the field; but the SSPX has continued to be both the most representative of the traditionalist (and Tridentinist) movement, as well as commanding the greatest numbers. Since he was steadily training priests at his seminary at Ecône, Archbishop Lefebvre was able to send his graduates out to staff “parishes” in a number of countries. This remains the case today, even after the archbishop’s death. By the time the schism became formalized in 1988, the archbishop had ordained more than 200 priests and claimed to have organized followers

in over 25 countries. Accurate numbers are, again, hard to come by, with Lefebvrite sympathizers sometimes claiming as many as a million followers worldwide, while the Vatican estimated the numbers involved in the schism to be somewhere between 50,000 and 100,000.

It was the initial illicit ordination of priests by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre that got him into formal and serious trouble with the Holy See and brought about his suspension *a divinis* in 1976 (see Pope Paul VI's letter to Archbishop Lefebvre in Appendix IV). In the beginning, the seminary he founded at Ecône was actually ecclesiastically approved; only after the archbishop began his denunciations of what he saw as the errors of the Council did Church authorities begin to have second thoughts about what was going on at Ecône. It was as a result of Archbishop Lefebvre's illicitly ordaining thirteen priests in July, 1976, that Pope Paul VI was finally obliged to suspend him from exercising his priestly and episcopal ministries. In this case, the archbishop had acted in defiance of a formal warning—indeed, an anguished plea from Paul VI—not to carry out these illicit ordinations.

Later, in September, 1976, a meeting to try to heal the breach was arranged between the archbishop and Paul VI (who, earlier, had declined to meet with the disobedient prelate in person). Nothing came of this meeting, however; everything broke down over the archbishop's refusal to accept the Second Vatican Council. In his view, it was the "conciliar Church" that was "disobedient" and "in schism." For him, the principles of the French Revolution had entered into, and had undermined, the Catholic Church. According to him, "the new Mass expresses a new faith which is not Catholic." He employed even stronger language on occasion, characterizing the new Mass as a "bastard rite" and the Church's new sacramental rites as "bastard sacraments . . . [and] the priests coming from the seminaries are bastard priests."

After the election of Pope John Paul II in 1979, negotiations were resumed between the archbishop and the Holy See. From the beginning of his pontificate, the new Pope was most anxious to find a way to reconcile the Lefebvrites to the Church. One might have thought that he would be more successful in this than Paul VI had been, since the latter was generally perceived as a "Vatican II liberal" pope, while John Paul II was considered to be much more "conservative." Certainly, from the beginning of his pontificate, he was a stricter disciplinarian. Actually, it was not very long after his election that the Polish pope began to be attacked by *liberal* writers

on the grounds that he somehow wished to “roll back” the Council. This was not true, of course; he nevertheless came under attack from liberal elements simply because he wanted the Council applied more faithfully.

The Traditionalists, however, never considered John Paul II to be anything but another “Vatican II bishop.” In this they were absolutely correct. At the Council, along with the Polish bishops, Archbishop Karol Wojtyla of Krakow took a prominent role in promoting the schema on religious liberty to which the Traditionalists objected, and still object, so strongly. Quite apart from that, the Traditionalists over the years strenuously opposed many of the Polish pope’s initiatives. Archbishop Lefebvre, for example, severely condemned John Paul II’s initial World Day of Prayer for Peace, held at Assisi on October 27, 1986, to which dozens of leaders of various religions were invited to come to the birthplace of Saint Francis to pray for peace together, and which has, subsequently, been repeated several times.

Archbishop Lefebvre branded this entire, very widely publicized affair as a “public blasphemy”—although prayers for peace in common with other “men of good will” surely in no way compromise the integrity of Catholic worship, nor do they change any Catholic teaching in the slightest, nor do they alter the Church’s continuing claim, reiterated and reinforced by the Council, to possess the fullness of the revelation of Jesus Christ and to possess all of the seven sacraments that Christ instituted in the Church He founded. Nevertheless, the Traditionalists still believe that such irenic and ecumenical gestures do water down the faith, and compromise and betray the Church’s mission, as they understand it.

The Traditionalists were no less severe concerning other events of the same kind. They opposed, for example, John Paul II’s emphasis during his pontificate on ecumenism. The Pontiff, of course, saw himself as simply carrying out the mandate of Vatican II, but the Traditionalists regularly derided, in particular, such things as the pope’s visits to synagogues and mosques, his meetings with Muslim leaders, his pilgrimage to Jerusalem and prayers at the Wailing Wall. John Paul II was also much criticized for his many common declarations and joint statements with leaders of separated Christian bodies, as well as for his various “apologies” for the past sins and shortcomings of Catholics.

Even though the Traditionalists thought much of neither John Paul II nor of his approach to various contemporary issues, the Polish pope

nevertheless sought reconciliation with them at least as vigorously as he ever cultivated better relations with any “separated brethren.” No doubt the Pope thought of the Traditionalists as tragically “separated brethren” themselves, but simply of more recent vintage than the Protestants or the Orthodox. As much as four years before the final break with the Lefebvrites, John Paul II had directed the Congregation for Divine Worship to issue a Letter, *Quattuor Abhinc Annos*,² dated October 3, 1984, which authorized bishops to allow the celebration of Masses using the old Missal which the faithful who preferred the Tridentine Mass could then attend under a special “indult.” Such Masses could not be regular parish Masses, however; they had to be in “churches and chapels appointed by the bishop and not in parish churches, unless the local bishop permits it by way of exception.”

Another condition for the celebration of these exceptional Tridentine Masses was that the groups requesting them were required to be accepting of Vatican II and the revised Roman Missal: “There must be unequivocal, even public, evidence that the priest and people petitioning have no ties with those who impugn the lawfulness and doctrinal soundness of the Roman Missal promulgated in 1970 by Pope Paul VI. . . . The granting of the indult may in no way be used as an obstacle to faithful observance of liturgical reform” (see Appendix V). This condition obviously excluded the SSPX and some other traditionalist groups.

Nevertheless, indult Latin Tridentine Masses were accepted with gratitude by some groups of Traditionalists, and periodic Tridentine Masses were instituted in at least a few dioceses. Many bishops, however, proved reluctant to allow them and thus, as they saw it, open up the whole Tridentinist Pandora’s Box. Some bishops flatly refused even to consider allowing them. The bias against any Latin Mass apparently remained strong with some of them. Meanwhile, Archbishop Lefebvre and the SSPX would have nothing to do with these exceptional indult Masses; to have accepted them would have been a good deal less than a half loaf; it would have meant abandoning the whole SSPX position, which holds the Vatican II liturgical reforms to be invalid. The Society was unwilling to consider changing this stance. Some other Traditionalists have followed the lead of the SSPX in the matter.

The Holy See nevertheless continued its efforts to effect a reconciliation, even in spite of repeated rebuffs by the SSPX. Various discussions took

2 Available on-line at <http://www.ewtn.com/library/curia/cdw62ind.htm>.

place between the SSPX and Roman emissaries or go-betweens, but they came to nothing. Faced with the threat that the archbishop would probably soon be ordaining a bishop to succeed him—he was 82 years old in 1988 and his movement could hardly continue without a bishop to ordain its priests—John Paul II urged the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to try harder. In October 1987, the Congregation announced the appointment of an apostolic visitor, the “conservative” Canadian Cardinal Edouard Gagnon, to examine the status of the SSPX.

Eventually the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith thought that a tentative agreement had been reached. It was set forth in a protocol dated May 5, 1988, signed by both Archbishop Lefebvre and Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, in accordance with which the Holy See would recognize the Society of Saint Pius X and allow the archbishop to nominate one of his followers to be ordained a bishop as his successor, subject to Roman approval. In return, the validity of Vatican II and its teachings would have to be accepted by the SSPX. Archbishop Lefebvre himself stated publicly at one point that he had reached agreement with the Vatican on this.

But this tentative agreement broke down. The SSPX people claimed that it broke down because “liberal bishops” complained that too many concessions had been made. It was more likely, as some Roman officials told the press, that Archbishop Lefebvre’s followers had persuaded him that it would be wrong for him to embrace Vatican II. Although nearing death, he no doubt wished to see the whole question settled with Rome. Still, probably very little persuasion was required to forestall his accepting Vatican II. Rejection of the Council, after all, had been the principal motive for nearly all of his activities from the time of his founding of the seminary at Ecône.

However that may be, Archbishop Lefebvre did finally end up rejecting the tentative agreement that was thought to have been reached in May 1988. A month later, at the end of June 1988, he proceeded to ordain four new bishops, incurring excommunication thereby both for himself and for them, as we have already noted. How seriously Rome regarded the whole matter can be gauged by the fact that excommunication was finally resorted to. Excommunication had become extremely rare in the post-conciliar Church, and was almost never invoked except in the case of sacramental (not doctrinal) cases. In the Lefebvre case, the Holy See had at one time or another tried to stretch or bend or delay almost every one of its own rules. John Paul II proved perhaps even too ready to allow

worship according to the Tridentine mode, even though a general council of the Church had so solemnly decided in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* that this liturgy was to be reformed.

For John Paul II, however, it was enough if the Traditionalists would simply state that they “accepted” Vatican II. He showed himself willing to accommodate those who wished to worship according to the Tridentine mode, provided only that they would agree that the Council and its revised mode of worship were also valid. Illicit ordinations of new bishops, however, proved to be something else again; such ordinations were too much even for this Pope, anxious as he was for a reconciliation with the Traditionalists. Archbishop Lefebvre’s act was clearly illegal and was a conscious, calculated, and defiant setting aside of the Pope’s authority.

Authority is the power to command; it requires obedience on the part of those subject to it; defiance or rejection of it amounts to a practical denial of it. There was no other way an act such as Archbishop Lefebvre’s illicit ordinations of four schismatic bishops could be handled except to let the Church’s automatic provision of excommunication proceed against all those involved.

Following the excommunications, Pope John Paul II proceeded almost immediately—only two days later, as a matter of fact—to issue an apostolic letter *Ecclesia Dei*, dated July 2, 1988,³ in which he established a special Commission, to be headed by a cardinal, to try to salvage what could be salvaged out of the now accomplished Lefebvre Schism. The German Cardinal Paul Augustin Mayer, known to have strongly “traditionalist” sympathies was named the first head of this Commission.

Two specific tasks were assigned to the *Ecclesia Dei* Commission: the first one was that the Commission was to make every effort to reconcile those among Archbishop Lefebvre’s followers (and any other willing Traditionalists) who might not wish to follow the archbishop into formal schism; but rather, who desired “to remain united with the successor of Peter in the Catholic Church, while preserving their spiritual and liturgical traditions.” By this was meant that Rome was still willing to recognize traditionalist groups and allow them to continue to celebrate the Tridentine Mass, provided only that they would also accept the validity of the Council and of the new Mass.

This provision of *Ecclesia Dei* soon bore fruit. It turned out that no small number of priests was willing to defect from the ranks of the SSPX. It

3 Available on-line at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_commissions/ecclsdei.

was one thing to be a strict traditionalist while Archbishop Lefebvre himself still remained un-excommunicated, and, indeed, was still actively engaged in negotiating with the Holy See. It was something else again once the archbishop had been formally excommunicated and officially declared to be in schism. A fair number of Tridentinist priests very soon decided that they did not want to follow the Lefebvrites into actual schism, and they therefore indicated their willingness to be reconciled with the Church.

Within two months after the excommunication of Archbishop Lefebvre, the monks at the Benedictine Abbey in Barrou, France, for example, agreed to a return to doctrinal and disciplinary loyalty to the Church (while being allowed to continue celebrating the Tridentine Mass). More importantly, a new order of priests, the Priestly Society of Saint Peter (FSSP) was formed with its own religious superior and a membership of ex-Lefebvrite priests unwilling to follow their former leader into formal schism. The FSSP's ranks would shortly be augmented by the ordination of new priests attached to the Latin Tridentine Mass, but desirous of remaining in communion with the Church.

The Holy See's policy of wide latitude in all of this under *Ecclesia Dei* was thus made very clear: the "traditional" Mass and sacraments would be allowed, provided those wishing to have them recognize the validity of Vatican II, of the new Order of the Mass, and the legitimate authority of the Holy See and the bishops.

The second specific task of the *Ecclesia Dei* Commission established by Pope John Paul II in the wake of the Lefebvre Schism was to promote more vigorously the "indult" Tridentine Masses already allowed by the 1984 *Quattuor Abhinc Annos*. The pope declared in *Ecclesia Dei* that "respect must everywhere be shown for the feelings of all those who are attached to the Latin liturgical tradition, by a wide and generous application of the directives already issued some time ago by the Apostolic See for the use of the Roman Missal according to the typical edition of 1962" (the last edition of the Roman Missal published prior to the liturgical reforms decreed by the Council).

As a result of *Ecclesia Dei*'s emphasis, there certainly did come about an increase in the number of indult Tridentine Masses available to the interested faithful in various dioceses. With the issuance of the document, and the establishment of the *Ecclesia Dei* Commission, some of the Catholics who preferred the traditional Latin liturgy also began working more actively to promote such indult Masses. Lists of now "legal" Tridentine

Masses shortly became public knowledge and were readily available to any who were interested. (The full text of *Quattuor Abhinc Annos* is contained in Appendix V and that of *Ecclesia Dei* in Appendix VI).

Accurate numbers of how many Catholics remained thus firmly attached to the old Mass, however, were not so easily available, nor is this the case even today. Although those who wish to celebrate the Tridentine Mass *should* be accommodated, it does not appear that the numbers of them are anywhere very large. Most Catholics have been satisfied with, or at least reconciled to, the reformed vernacular Mass. It has been largely “received” by the faithful by almost any test that one might devise.

However, some, if not most, bishops have continued to be quite unenthusiastic about *any* kind of Latin Mass in their dioceses: many of them have still not authorized Latin Tridentine Masses, even following the Pope’s urging in *Ecclesia Dei* that there be “a wide and generous application” of the permission to celebrate the old Mass under the conditions stipulated.

Pope John Paul II continued to be anxious to accommodate those who wanted the Latin Tridentine Mass—as long as they otherwise accepted the authority of the Church and Vatican II. In April, 2000, the prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy, the Columbian Cardinal Dario Castrillón Hoyos, was named president of the *Ecclesia Dei* Commission (while continuing to head the Congregation for the Clergy as well) and was given a mandate to try again to heal the Lefebvre Schism. Almost immediately he began negotiations with the SSPX and, in June 2000, he even met personally with Bishop Bernard Fellay, the superior general of the SSPX, along with the other three bishops who had been ordained by Archbishop Lefebvre. This meeting took place while these four SSPX bishops happened to be on a “pilgrimage” to Rome (they still profess allegiance to “eternal” Rome, although this allegiance does not extend to obeying the pope currently in office!).

Other negotiations between Rome and the SSPX followed over the next year, including additional personal meetings between Bishop Fellay and Cardinal Castrillón. The Roman plan appears to have been to offer the Society the status of an *apostolic administration* without territorial limits, whereby the SSPX—its bishops, priests, and communicants—would operate pretty much apart from the Church’s regular diocesan structure as a kind of separate “Latin Tridentine rite,” and be answerable directly to the Congregation of Bishops in Rome rather than to the local bishop.

This represented a considerable concession by the Holy See, which up to then had insisted that the Tridentine Mass was in no way another “rite,” as we too have noted in these pages. Allowing a separate “apostolic administration” for Tridentinists, however, would seem to establish it as at least the equivalent of another “rite.”

The Holy See has frequently in the history of the Church authorized religious orders to exist and function separately from regular diocesan structures. The idea of permitting a separate apostolic administration to operate would seem to be an eminently sensible way to reconcile those dissatisfied with the conciliar reforms. It nevertheless proved to be unsatisfactory for the SSPX, since the Society would still be “under” Rome and subject to the authority of the “conciliar” Church.

The SSPX believes Rome to be simply in the wrong on the principal matters at issue; it sees itself as in the right and as the bearer of the authentic Catholic tradition. It believes Vatican II was a bad dream which will one day simply have to be reversed when another “true Catholic”—Pius XIII, say, or Gregory XVII!—is finally at long last again elected to occupy Peter’s chair, and then proceeds to quash the acts of the Council!

There is no way anything like this is ever going to happen, of course; but for the moment, at least, the post-conciliar Church, in the SSPX view, including especially the Holy See, is believed to be adrift in the seas of modernist error. One of the SSPX demands, made in the course of negotiations with Rome, for example, was that every priest in the world should be given permission to say the Tridentine Mass (what the Traditionalists like to call “the traditional Mass of all time,” although, as we have seen, it only dates back to 1570, and has undergone changes since then). Moreover, the idea that Catholic priests should somehow have a *right* to go against what a general council of the Church has *decreed* can surely in no way be considered a *traditional* Catholic doctrine!

Speaking about the Vatican officials with whom he negotiated, the SSPX superior general, Bishop Bernard Fellay, said: “They do not want to touch Vatican II. Until we can break the taboo on discussing the new Mass and Vatican II, any talk of a rapprochement is premature.”⁴ In the SSPX view, the Council simply has to be abrogated, and there can be no reconciliation of the Society with the Church until it is. But the idea that a

4 This statement was given by Bishop Bernard Fellay in a 2001 interview with the *Latin Mass* magazine. The interview is available on-line at <http://www.daily catholic.org/issue/2002Jan/jan23ecc.htm>.

general council of the Church, ratified by a validly elected pope, *could* be wrong on matters of such importance would surely have to mean that the Catholic Church is not what she claims to be—for the doctrinal matters in dispute have long ago been decisively settled by the regular and legitimate authority of the Church.

The Catholic Church does not, never has, and never will, go back on the solemn decisions of her general councils arrived at “with the assistance of the Holy Spirit.” The unreality of the SSPX and of the extreme traditionalist positions on this matter should be evident to anyone who knows and understands what the true Tradition of the Church actually is.

Even though the SSPX was blinded and could no longer see how far outside the true Tradition of the Church it had ventured, the efforts of Cardinal Dario Castrillón Hoyos to come to an agreement and achieve reconciliation with Traditionalists nevertheless turned out to be successful in another quarter. On January 18, 2002, a new “apostolic administration” *was* established in Campos, Brazil. Named after Saint John Mary Vianney, the new apostolic administration was created for the 15 to 30 thousand traditionalist Catholics there who have continued to attend the Tridentine Masses maintained in that diocese following the refusal of the late Bishop Antonio de Castro Mayer to implement the Vatican II liturgical reforms. On August 18, 2002, a new coadjutor bishop, Dom Fernando Aars Rifan, was consecrated by Cardinal Castrillón himself as the head of the new apostolic administration. The new bishop described himself in a letter to his supporters as:

The first “traditionalist” bishop appointed for Catholics who attend Mass in the old Latin rite which was the norm before the Second Vatican Council. . . . I have been appointed bishop by the pope with the goal of serving Catholics who are attached to the traditional Mass, in perfect communion with the Church. The Holy See has granted to us as a proper rite the traditional Mass, the sacraments, sacramentals and Divine Office. . . . Our booming group of traditionalist faithful is served by priests who observe the traditional ways of life, wear cassocks every day, and faithfully pray the traditional Breviary. We have almost 30 priests, all staunchly attached to tradition and most quite young.

Thus, there is a way to reconcile Traditionalists who at least recognize the legitimate authority of the pope and the validity of the Council, even if they dislike what the Council decided as well as how the popes carried out some of the conciliar mandates following the Council. John Paul II himself, in *Ecclesia Dei*, quoting the Council, aptly put his finger on the fundamental *error* of the kind of thinking that, tragically, led to the Lefebvre ordinations and to the formal schism that followed. Extensively quoting from Vatican II, the pope pointed out in this regard that:

The root of this schismatic act can be discerned in an incomplete and contradictory notion of the Tradition. Incomplete, because it does not take sufficiently into account the *living* character of Tradition, which, as the Second Vatican Council clearly taught, “comes from the apostles and progresses in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit. There is a growth in insight into the realities and words that are being passed on. This comes about in various ways. It comes through the contemplation and study of believers who ponder these things in their hearts. It comes from the intimate sense of spiritual realities which they experience. And it comes from the preaching of those who have received, along with their right of succession in the episcopate, the sure charism of truth.” (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*, no. 8). But especially contradictory is a notion of Tradition which opposes the universal Magisterium of the Church possessed by the Bishop of Rome and the Body of Bishops. It is impossible to remain faithful to the Tradition while breaking the ecclesial bond with him to whom, the person of the Apostle Peter, Christ himself entrusted the ministry of unity in his Church (Cf. Mt. 16:18; Lk. 10:16).⁵

The reconciliation of the Brazilian Traditionalists seems to have been the best and most successful of the efforts of John Paul II to reconcile the Traditionalists to the Council and to the Church. We may hope that other Traditionalists will similarly be reconciled on the same basis.

5 Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia Dei* (July 2, 1988), no. 4.

The Election of Pope Benedict XVI

Prior to the death of Pope John Paul II on April 2, 2005, it was often repeated that no successor could ever match the great Polish pope's remarkable charisma and communications skills. It turned out, however, that his successor, Benedict XVI, elected on April 19, 2005, did not have to, and in fact wisely did not try. From the outset he exhibited his own remarkable public presence, evident at his installation and even before that in the ceremonies and the funeral Mass for John Paul II as well as in the pre-conclave ceremonies. This remarkable public presence of Benedict XVI was subsequently verified abundantly in such events as the World Youth Day in Cologne in August of 2005 and the Eleventh Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October of 2005. The same has been true of his speeches and allocutions delivered to a variety of groups, especially his Wednesday audiences. The man is both a born, as well as a practiced, teacher.

One might have expected that the ceremonial duties of the papacy alone would be crushing, especially for a man more than 78 years old; it is hard to see how any one man could have time for much of anything else. Yet Benedict XVI has continued to carry out his public duties with exceptional dignity and serenity without in any way projecting an image of either weariness, aloofness, or pompousness. Quite evidently he wants his time on the chair of Peter—on the day of his election he remarked that his would be a “short reign”—to be a time for the world to be regularly reminded from the standpoint of his unique position and office not only of the saving truths of Jesus Christ but also of the peace and joy brought into the world by the Savior of mankind. This chosen approach to his awesome task was amply confirmed by the subject of his first encyclical, *God is Love Deus Caritas Est*, issued on December 25, 2006.

Nevertheless, Benedict's election to the papacy was in many ways surprising. Among the cardinals considered *papabili*, or capable of being elected pope, he was considered by many observers to be too old, too “controversial” (on account of many of the positions and actions he had taken, both as CDF prefect and as a theologian), and also someone with too many “enemies” supposedly acquired as a result of carrying out his CDF duties, which necessarily included disciplining errant theologians. Most of his actions were just not very popular in certain theological circles, nor were they generally praised in the media. Rather, as a Curia cardinal, Benedict had acquired the reputation of a stern, harsh, and unmovable hard liner—exactly what was widely thought the Church did *not* need. As a cardinal he was openly

mocked by some and was even given pejorative nicknames such as “God’s Rottweiler,” “the enforcer,” or the *Panzerkardinal*.

In fact, these characterizations of him were caricatures, as anyone who had followed his work or read his writings had to know and as any of his fellow cardinals who had ever dealt with him also had to know. Some of the other members of the College of Cardinals, who perhaps did not know him quite so well, nevertheless must have been enormously impressed by the performance of his duties as Dean of the College following the death of John Paul II and during the period leading up to the opening of the conclave, especially in the homily he preached at the funeral of the late pontiff.⁶ It was based on the words of Jesus, “Follow me.” In it, Cardinal Ratzinger reviewed, briefly but very movingly, many of the ways in which Karol Wojtyła, who became John Paul II, had so demonstrably followed Jesus in the course of his life and career. Cardinal Ratzinger’s televised recital quite simply melted hearts. It would have been hard for any of the cardinals to whom it was directly preached to have remained unmoved or not to have recognized the rare quality of the man capable of preaching such a homily.

“Follow me!” These words of Jesus rang especially true on the occasion of the late, great pope’s passing, when the world was reminded of the many ways in which Pope John Paul II, not only in his pontificate but in his life, *had* followed Christ. In the same way, the genuine piety, modesty, and lack of pretence or self-importance of the homilist could not help but come through as well. It had seemed to be an accident that Cardinal Ratzinger, after nearly a quarter of a century working in the Roman Curia, had just happened by seniority to succeed to the deanship of the College of Cardinals so that he was positioned to play the role he played at the papal funeral and in the course of the preparations for the conclave. But then again, perhaps, it was not an accident, as believers in divine Providence may well surmise. Accident or not, Cardinal Ratzinger’s role put on public display the attitudes and formidable abilities of the man so often denigrated for faithfully carrying out the work which John Paul II had summoned him to do as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith from 1981 onward.

Then there was the homily preached by this same dean of the College for the Election of the Roman Pontiff just before the cardinals went into

6 In *L'Osservatore Romano* (English Edition, April 13, 2005).

the conclave.⁷ In this homily, mostly devoted to the saving merits of Jesus Christ, Cardinal Ratzinger remarked that “to have a clear faith according to the Church’s creed is today too often labeled fundamentalism, while relativism, letting ourselves be carried away by any wind of doctrine, appears as the only appropriate attitude for acceptance by today’s standards. We are moving towards a dictatorship of relativism which does not recognize anything as certain and which has as its highest goal one’s own ego and one’s own desires.”

The reference to a contemporary “dictatorship of relativism” did not fail to provoke the usual hue and cry from some of today’s “usual suspects,” denigrators of the Faith and of the Church’s authentic teachings. It was immediately picked up by the secular media: here was an untamed churchman daring to criticize how things were going in the world today! Think of it! Notre Dame University theologian Father Richard P. McBrien, speaking more with the voice of the typical secular political reporter than with that of a *bona fide* Catholic theologian, was quoted in *The Washington Post* as saying that “if Cardinal Ratzinger was really campaigning for pope, he would have given a far more conciliatory homily designed to appeal to the moderates as well as to the hard liners among the cardinals.”⁸

We need not—as often as not we *must* not—automatically believe what the “experts” tell us about the Church of Christ and her leaders through the popular media. In the very same issue of the *Washington Post*, Father McBrien again offered his supposedly expert opinion that “many of the cardinal-electors who have been restive under the incessant pressures brought to bear by the Roman Curia will want assurances from the fellow cardinal they elect that he will respect their authority”—as if Pope John Paul II and his CDF prefect had *not* expended considerable efforts over a long period of time trying to get the bishops of the world to exercise the authority they have from Jesus Christ more effectively in defense of the Faith at a time of crisis in the Church.

In any event, Cardinal Ratzinger was hardly “campaigning” for pope. That truly is not the way it is done in the Catholic Church. Nor did the cardinals turn out to be as “restive” about the exercise of responsible and legitimate papal authority as some liberal commentators imagined. Rather, the cardinals seemed more concerned about such phenomena as today’s

7 Text in *Origins*, vol. 34, no. 45 (NC Documentary Service: April 28, 2005).

8 *The Washington Post* (April 19, 2005).

increasingly widespread disregard for traditional morality, today's drastic decline in the stability of marriage and the family, and the looming dangers of today's new biotechnology with its Frankenstein-monster experiments now suddenly being carried out on a massive scale in our society.

In particular, the cardinals seemed preoccupied by the relentless secularization going on in the developed world, especially in Europe. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger evidently appeared to most of them to be just the man to guide the Church through the perilous waters created by these contemporary developments. And indeed we can be quite confident that, as pope, Benedict XVI will continue to speak out eloquently and effectively on Europe's current rejection of her Christian and Catholic heritage. He has already done so—for example, in such books of his as *Turning Point for Europe*.⁹

As one of the most outstanding of the notable group of German-speaking theologians that emerged after World War II, well-trained as only those who have gone through the German higher educational system at that time could be, knowledgeable and versatile in many areas, already an influential *peritus* at Vatican Council II, Cardinal Ratzinger would have been content to remain an academic theologian and professor, as he has publicly stated on more than one occasion. Instead he was called by Popes Paul VI and John Paul II to fill important Church offices, first as archbishop of Munich (named in 1977) and then as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome (named in 1981).

As a theologian, he was easily the peer—and most of the time the superior—of any theologian whose work he might ever have been called upon to examine. The idea that he represented a hierarchy of bishops ignorant of modern theological trends and niceties, yet determined to harass honest theologians anyway, was simply absurd. On the contrary, even amidst the burdens of ecclesiastical office, he was quite determined to keep up to date with contemporary theological developments. The only condition he asked of the pope in accepting the appointment to the Congregation was that he be permitted to continue with his own personal theological work. This he did in abundance. The fruits of his request to the pope are evident in the numerous books and articles on a wide range of topics that he has continued to produce throughout all the years of his service in the Munich archdiocese and in the Roman Curia. It is astounding,

9 Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Turning Point for Europe* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994).

in fact, that he has had time for anything other than producing all the work that he has in fact produced—much less that he has at the same time ably and continuously filled vital Church posts at the highest levels.

That such a man could actually be elected pope has got to be one more small piece of evidence that the Holy Spirit has not abandoned the Catholic Church. That he adopted the name “Benedict” is manifestly an indication of the kind of pontificate that he wished to carry out and has in fact been carrying out. St. Benedict, after all, is one of the patron saints of Europe (now along with his co-patrons, Saints Cyril and Methodius, apostles of the Slavs and favorites of Pope John Paul II). Presumably along with the majority of the cardinals who elected him, Benedict undoubtedly sees working for the revitalization of the faith in a secularized and now partially “Islamacized” Europe to be one of the principal tasks to which he has been called to respond. This seemed evident, for example, from the way that he conducted the 2005 World Youth Day in Cologne.

Working for a revitalized Europe is not his only task, however. As head of a worldwide, universal Church, he perforce now has a much wider range of responsibilities than he had as CDF prefect. In this connection, those who saw his election as possibly heralding some kind of new and wider “crack-down” from Rome on dissenters misjudged their man—as if there previously had really ever been such a crack-down by him. Rather, although the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith indeed has a fine and consistent record of upholding Catholic orthodoxy, the years of Cardinal Ratzinger’s tenure there have actually been years of relative leniency, especially when we consider the scope of the problem of dissent in the Church today. The fact is that much dissent unfortunately continues to go on uncorrected. Generally speaking, Cardinal Ratzinger and his colleagues in the Congregation have mostly only gone after *leaders* of theological dissent in the formal actions they have taken—and sometimes, perhaps, only after the most notorious of them. Evidently this was the policy of Pope John Paul II as well. The main effort still seems to be directed to getting the bishops to shoulder their share of the corrective action that needs to be taken, perhaps on the theory that Rome cannot do it all.

In at least one important respect, however, the election of Benedict XVI did herald a new phase favoring further restoration of Catholic orthodoxy within the Church. Up until the death of Pope John Paul II,

various dissident elements within the Church had tirelessly continued to call for—and often to agitate for—a revision in or a relaxation of some of the Church’s teachings and rulings in order to allow married priests or female priests (in spite of Pope John Paul’s “definitive” judgment in his 1994 *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* that the Church does not have the power to ordain women), or to accept the moral licitness of contraception, homosexual unions, remarriage after divorce, and the like. The drumbeat in favor of these particular changes was incessant during the 1990s and early 2000s. They were such favorite topics of the media, in fact, that we sometimes had to wonder if most journalists and reporters had *any* other interest in the Catholic Church other than these issues.

A key and recurring idea in this connection was that once the “retrograde” Pope from “backward” Poland had departed from the scene, a new, “liberal,” and presumably more “enlightened” pope could then proceed to put in place all these favorite items on the liberal agenda that everybody understood had no chance under Pope John Paul II.

But these and similar expectations were instantly and utterly confounded by the election of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger as Pope Benedict XVI. Liberal hopes were dashed to the ground by the mere fact of his election: none other than the “enforcer” prefect of John Paul II’s doctrinal Congregation succeeded him as supreme pontiff! The Polish pope was obviously not the only obstacle to the watering down of the Church’s teaching or the relaxation of her moral rules. Since Benedict’s election, there has even been a distinct dropping-off (perhaps only temporary) of a great deal of the previous talk about all the desired liberal agenda items for the Church. It seems to have finally dawned at least on some people that the Church really means what she has said all along in her teachings, and is *not*, with Benedict XVI, going to go anywhere near where the revisionists and so many lukewarm Catholics have evidently wished and hoped she might go. The revisionist forces suffered a major setback by the mere fact of the election of Benedict XVI.

This fact provides a special perspective on the continuing prospects of the pontificate of Pope Benedict XVI. What are those prospects, particularly as regards our primary concerns here regarding the Council and the Mass? One of the most salient of these prospects is surely that the pontificate of Pope Benedict XVI is a continuation and then some of the pontificate of

Pope John Paul II. Benedict will surely continue to work to preserve and consolidate the gains of the previous pontificate, many of which he helped to make. He was, after all, the best known and the principal of John Paul's collaborators throughout most of the latter's pontificate—and not merely in matters of doctrine. A fair number of the achievements of Pope John Paul II might not have been realized—at least not with the same degree of success or excellence—if it had not been for the loyal CDF prefect at his side. That Cardinal Ratzinger headed the Commission of Cardinals that oversaw the production of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, for example—by itself as worthy an achievement as any cardinal might hope to accomplish during his work in the Roman Curia—constituted just one of the numerous instances in which the German cardinal was John Paul II's indispensable “point man.” As Pope, he has been carrying on in the same line.

With regard to the subject matter of this book, it should be noted that the sacred liturgy has long been one of the abiding interests and concerns of Benedict XVI. This has been true throughout his career as a theologian and prelate. He will surely as Pope continue to exert himself in order to have a favorable impact on the Church's liturgy. He is well aware that the liturgical reforms mandated by the Second Vatican Council have not been an unqualified success in all respects and are perhaps in need of more than a little “fine-tuning,” some of which began in earnest during the last years of John Paul II, especially during the tenure of Cardinals Medina Estevez and Arinze at the head of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. Especially with the publication of the revised General Instruction on the Roman Missal (GIRM) in 2001, we are seeing some significant improvements in the reformed liturgy, which could point to an authentic “reform of the reform” in accordance with the true mind of Vatican II.

In the 1990s, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger played a key role in rescuing liturgical translations from the professional liturgists, who were insisting upon employing so-called “inclusive language” and mediocre “dynamic equivalent” (non-literal) translations which sometimes failed to render the full sacred meaning of the original Latin of the Roman rite. It is ironic that the task of improving the liturgy in English fell in significant part to the German prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, but we can only be grateful that it did fall to him.

Pope Benedict's love for, and profound understanding of the sacred liturgy are notable in such books of his as *Feast of Faith*,¹⁰ *A New Song for the Lord*,¹¹ and *The Spirit of the Liturgy*.¹² These are books that need to be read and reflected upon by everyone concerned about the Church's liturgy and worship. They take us far beyond the not unimportant but nevertheless rather superficial questions concerning such things as whether we should stand or kneel for Communion or where the tabernacle should be placed.

Instead, these books plumb the depth of the meaning of the sacred liturgy, especially of the holy Eucharist: the liturgy is "the entry of the eternal into our present moment in the liturgical action."¹³ "The Eucharist is an entry into the liturgy of heaven; by it we become contemporaries with Jesus Christ's own act of worship into which, through his Body, he takes up worldly time and straightaway leads it beyond itself." ¹⁴ The goal of the Eucharist is "our own transformation. . . . that we become one body and spirit with Christ."¹⁵

Or, again, in a slightly different mode: "It is not enough to describe the Eucharist as the community meal. It cost the Lord his life, and only at this price can we enjoy the gift of the resurrection."¹⁶ Or, in a somewhat more negative vein: "The turning of the priest towards the people turned the community into a self-enclosed circle. In its outward form, it no longer opens out on what lies ahead and above."¹⁷ This latter theme, that the liturgy is a divine reality and not a human thing subject to our manipulation, is an abiding theme in the thought of the thinker who became Benedict XVI:

. . . [The Church] is given the power, the authority, to speak words of salvation and to perform deeds of salvation which humans need and can never achieve on their own. No one can usurp the "I" of Christ or the "I" of God. The priest speaks with this "I" when he says: "This my body" and when

10 Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986).

11 Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *A New Song for the Lord* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co., 1996).

12 Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002).

13 Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, p. 60.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 70.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 87.

16 Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, p. 150.

17 Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, p. 80.

he says "I forgive you your sins." It is not the priest who forgives them—that would not count for much—but God who forgives them, and this definitely changes everything. But what a shaking event it is that a human being is permitted to utter the "I" of God! The priest can do it only on the authority which the Lord has given his Church. Without this authority he is nothing but a social worker.¹⁸

These few samples of Benedict's previous thought on the subject of the liturgy—many more could be cited—point to a churchman utterly dedicated to getting the liturgy right and one who knows what *is* right. As Pope, he surely wants to do what he can to help the Church fully implement at long last the liturgical reform mandated by the Council that, even after more than forty years, still remains to be properly carried out. This does not mean that we should expect any sudden drastic initiatives, however. That does not seem to be Benedict's style. He has expressly stated, for example, that "nothing is more harmful to the liturgy than constant activism,"¹⁹ and that "it would not be right to press for future external changes after the upheavals of the last few years."²⁰

What we can expect, however, is that Benedict XVI will support and perhaps initiate prudent "reforms of the reform" which develop naturally and organically out of issues with which he will be dealing in the course of his pontificate. In this connection, it was perhaps not outside the purview of divine Providence that this Pope happened to be elected in the Year of the Eucharist when an assembly of the Synod of Bishops was also scheduled to meet and deliberate precisely on the theme of the Eucharist! This is a subject on which this pope has written and preached both beautifully and profoundly, and we can surely expect that the papal Apostolic Exhortation which customarily follows each Synod assembly will prove to be a major and permanent addition to the Church's patrimony of teaching on the subject of the Holy Eucharist.

When Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger was elected pope as Benedict XVI, many people expected that he would move almost immediately to place greater emphasis upon the Latin liturgy and perhaps even grant wider permission

18 Ratzinger, *A New Song for the Lord*, p. 54.

19 Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, p. 183.

20 Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, p. 139.

for the celebration of the Latin Tridentine Mass. Nor would it have been any great surprise if he had also moved quite soon to renew the Holy See's efforts to reconcile those, such as the members of the Society of St. Pius X (SSPX), who are currently in schism. Cardinal Ratzinger had long been known for his acts of courtesy towards Traditionalists, and he was considered by many of them to be a friend. He was certainly both knowledgeable about traditionalist questions and believed to be sympathetic to them.

This sympathy was evident in such writings as the preface he wrote to the French edition of the book by the late Regensburg liturgist, Monsignor Klaus Gamber, entitled *The Reform of the Liturgy*. Cardinal Ratzinger's rather blunt words in this preface excited some Traditionalists almost to the point of considering him to be one of their own (although the basic ideas he expressed in this preface were quite consistent with ideas of his contained in his better-known books on the liturgy, such as those noted above). Concerning Klaus Gamber's treatment of liturgical reform, however, he wrote, *inter alia*:

What happened after the Council was something else entirely: in the place of the liturgy as the fruit of development came fabricated liturgy. We abandoned the organic, living process of growth and development over centuries, and replaced it—as in a manufacturing process—with a fabrication, a banal, on-the-spot product. Gamber, with the vigilance of a true prophet and the courage of a true witness, opposed this falsification, and, thanks to his incredibly rich knowledge, indefatigably taught us about the living fullness of a true liturgy. As a man who knew and loved history, he showed us the multiple forms and paths of liturgical development; as a man who looked at history from the inside, he saw in this development and its fruit the intangible reflection of the eternal liturgy, that which is not the object of our action, but which can continue marvelously to mature and blossom, if we unite ourselves intimately with its mystery. The death of this eminent man and priest should spur us on; his work should give us a new impetus.²¹

21 From the back cover of Monsignor Klaus Gamber, *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy: Its Problems and Background*. Translated from the original German by Klaus D. Grimm. Co-published by the Una Voce Press, San Juan Capistrano, California, and the Foundation for Catholic Reform, P.O. Box 255, Harrison, New York 10528, 1993.

In spite of the sympathy for the traditionalist critique of the reformed liturgy which this passage evinces, Cardinal Ratzinger was certainly also aware of the difficulties involved in dealing with the Church's liturgical reform in the way that the issue had come to be framed by the Traditionalists. Nor was he without experience in dealing with the Traditionalists themselves. After all, he had personally conducted some of the ultimately failed negotiations with Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre. And then, in August 2005, as Benedict XVI, he met in person with Bishop Bernard Fellay of the Society of St. Pius X (although no immediate results were announced as having come out of this meeting).

During the better part of the first year of the new pontificate, though, there were no public papal words or actions bearing upon the questions of the Tridentine Mass or the phenomenon of today's Catholic Traditionalism. Cardinal Francis Arinze even remarked on how these issues were scarcely mentioned at the October Synod on the Eucharist.

Early in 2006, however, voices began to be heard, indicating that the pope intended to be more pro-active in seeking reconciliation with the Traditionalists. In a meeting with the leaders of the Roman Curia held on February 13, 2006, press reports indicated that Pope Benedict XVI was now actively seeking advice on how to approach the SSPX in particular. The ANSA Italian news service reported that the Pope was considering a proposal to grant a degree of autonomy to the SSPX, allowing regular celebration of the Tridentine Mass by them.²²

Then, on February 22, 2006, the Pope announced that he was naming fifteen new cardinals and calling a consistory of all the cardinals to meet in March. Included in the topics announced to be discussed with the cardinals was the question of how to heal the breach with the Catholic Traditionalists (the other announced topics were Islam, retired bishops, and liturgical texts).²³ Including the Traditionalist question as one of the priority issues to be discussed with the cardinals surely amounted to signaling its importance as one of the priority issues on Pope Benedict's list.

Not without significance also was the additional fact that of the fifteen newly named cardinals invested by Benedict at this consistory, three of them were shortly named, on April 6, 2006, to be members of the *Ecclesia Dei* Commission in charge of the "indult" Tridentine Mass. They were:

²² *The Catholic World Report* (April, 2006).

²³ *Ibid.*

Cardinal William Joseph Levada, the former Archbishop of San Francisco and Benedict's successor as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, who would thus be on hand to deal with any doctrinal questions that might arise in talks with the schismatic SSPX movement; Cardinal Jean-Pierre Ricard, Archbishop of Bordeaux, France, and president of the French bishops' conference, and hence someone also particularly interested and involved in questions concerning the SSPX, which, after all, had been launched by the late French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre; and, finally, there was Cardinal Antonio Cañizares Llovera, Archbishop of Toledo, Spain.²⁴

It was on the day before the consistory itself, March 22, 2006, that discussions with the cardinals on the four topics which had been chosen by Benedict XVI took place. Cardinal Dario Castrillón Hoyos, prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy and president of the Commission *Ecclesia Dei*, introduced the topic of outreach to Traditionalist Catholics. Following these discussions, Cardinal Castrillón Hoyos was quoted in the press as saying that the cardinals had discussed "the best formula" for allowing the Lefebvrists to restore proper relations with the Holy See and hence with the Catholic Church. He added that "the Church is waiting with open arms" to restore communion with them.²⁵

Then, on April 7, following the meeting of the French bishops' conference, the new French Cardinal Ricard went out of his way to state publicly that the Pope was indeed expected to be issuing new instructions that would allow broader use of the Latin Tridentine Mass and would appeal to Traditionalists. Cardinal Ricard did not indicate when this would be, however, stating only that it would be "in the coming weeks or months," disappointing thereby many who had hoped for quicker action.²⁶ It is also to be noted, however, that very little detail was divulged in any of the statements of these senior prelates who had been involved in the discussions with the Pope concerning just what new measures might be in the offing.

Meanwhile, while all these meetings and discussions were going on, rumors abounded concerning just what measures the Pope might be intending to take. One of these rumors was that Benedict would issue a *motu proprio* allowing universal use by Catholic priests of the 1962 Roman Missal. All along this had continued to be one of the "demands"

24 In *L'Osservatore Romano* (English edition, April 19, 2006).

25 *The Catholic World Report* (April, 2006).

26 Catholic World News article at www.cwnnews.com (April 23, 2006).

of the SSPX, which has long contended that any Catholic priest should have the “right” to celebrate Mass in accordance with the old Missal. How such “rights talk” had ever become a part of “the Catholic tradition” was generally not explained. How such a right could be considered compatible with Vatican II’s directives that the liturgy should be reformed was similarly not clear—but then possibly the SSPX continued to “demand” this “right” precisely *because* granting it could be interpreted by them as an official repudiation of the Council and its directives by the Church.

Among other rumors that swirled around in the spring of 2006, there was one to the effect that the Pope would soon create an apostolic administration or personal prelature for Traditionalist Catholics, in effect thereby establishing the Tridentine Mass as another “rite” within the Catholic Church. Yet another rumor was that Benedict was prepared to lift the excommunication of the SSPX leaders under certain (unspecified) conditions.²⁷ One especially strong rumor was that some or all of these intended papal actions would be announced by the Pope on Holy Thursday. However, Holy Thursday came and went with no such announcement, after which hopes and expectations focused on Easter Sunday. But then Easter Sunday too came and went with nothing new being announced.

Near the end of April, Cardinal Jorge Medina Estevez, a former prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments—and also a member of the *Ecclesia Dei* Commission—in an interview with an Italian news agency, was quoted as stating that the Tridentine Mass had never been “abrogated” and was consequently “legitimate.” Cardinal Medina Estevez also spoke about the kinds of actions being considered in the various meetings and discussions that had been taking place, and it appeared that such actions might well include: 1) a reaffirmation if not broadening of the authority of the *Ecclesia Dei* Commission in charge of the “indult” Tridentine Masses for those Catholics favoring this form of worship; 2) discussions with SSPX leaders with a view to possible reconciliation; and 3) the establishment of a canonical structure or apostolic administration for Traditionalist Catholics.²⁸

As the two authors of this book complete these revisions of *The Pope, the Council, and the Mass*, at the beginning of May, 2006, however, we have no way of knowing what action or actions Pope Benedict XVI might

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Catholic World News article at www.cwnews.com (May 1, 2006).

actually take concerning any of the issues that we have been discussing or that have been covered in this book generally. There can be no doubt that some of these issues are high on this Pope's priority list. Without doubt, he fervently hopes to find or contribute a solution to problems that have persisted since the reforms of Vatican Council II were instituted. Whether the actions he decides upon will suffice to begin to close the breach, however, is something that still remains to be seen.

In this regard, a statement by SSPX Bishop Bernard Fellay that was reported in the French magazine *Famille Chrétienne* in late April, suggests that the breach continues to be wide. While Bishop Fellay granted that "opening the door to the old liturgy would probably be the most fruitful way to resolve the crisis"—as we have noted, it could be interpreted as a repudiation of the Council's mandate to reform the liturgy—it is far from clear that even such a major step as this would ever satisfy the SSPX. And while Bishop Fellay also noted that he and the Pope had found a good deal of common ground in the course of their talk in August 2005, the SSPX leader nevertheless made clear to *Famille Chrétienne*, ominously, that he and his followers are still fundamentally unreconciled to the Second Vatican Council. "We propose to get *beyond* the Council," he was quoted as saying, "looking higher towards principles that cannot become outdated."²⁹

But it is far from clear how any real reconciliation with the Catholic Church can be achieved which does not include acceptance of the legitimacy of the official acts and decrees of the Church's twenty-first General Council. Pope Benedict XVI cannot but be acutely aware of the fundamental problem here. Writing about abuses in the liturgy, he may sometimes almost be taken for a Traditionalist. Writing about the Council, however, he always strikes a very different note. There are few or no more ardent defenders of the Council, in fact, than Benedict has proved himself to be, time and time again. For him, the Council was not a mistake. For him, the words and acts of the Council are valid.

How this champion of the Council will be able to reconcile those who explicitly reject the Council is another one of those things that remains to be seen. Yet this important task is only one of the many tasks that this pope, in whatever time God may allow to him, is being called upon to do. And who knows what other new developments may not be placed upon his shoulders as well?

29 Catholic World News article at www.cwnews.com (April 27, 2006. Emphasis added).

Whatever the developments, and perhaps even the vicissitudes, of this pontificate, now well underway as of this writing, there are at least two things that we can with considerable confidence expect of Pope Benedict XVI. They have been characteristic of him all along, both as a theologian and as a cardinal-archbishop. They are:

- He sees things as they are, and, to borrow the popular colloquial expression, “tells it like it is.” The whole world learned this about him in the case of his famous 1985 *Ratzinger Report*.³⁰ Though he was a dedicated man of the Church and of the Second Vatican Council—and no one was doing more to implement the Council and set the Church on the right course following upon it—he nevertheless did not flinch from identifying and describing some of the ways in which the Church was *not* necessarily on the right course following upon the Council and some of the ways in which the mandates of the Council were *not* necessarily being properly carried out. Many people at the time were perhaps more than a little shocked at his candor and realism, including perhaps some of his colleagues in the College of Cardinals. Nevertheless, his simple honesty and integrity could not but shine through, even (or perhaps we should say, especially) in *The Ratzinger Report*.
- Pope Benedict XVI will similarly never be primarily guided by what may seem to be merely practical or expedient “solutions,” but will almost certainly base his decisions on considerations of the Faith. As he wrote in his *Principles of Catholic Theology* some two decades ago: “The Church cannot be saved by compromise and accommodation but only by self-reflection and a depth of faith that opens the door to the Holy Spirit.”³¹ Thus, to take only one example, it is not likely that he will agree to the often advanced recommendation that married men (“*virī probati*”) should be ordained in order to solve the current problem of a

30 Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (with Vittorio Messori), *The Ratzinger Report: An Exclusive Interview on the State of the Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985).

31 Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology: Building Stones for a Fundamental Theology* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), p. 121.

shortage of priests. This is a solution that, according to press reports, was once again proposed by a number of the bishops at the assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October, 2005. Benedict is unlikely to be swayed by such arguments, however. It is not that he does not have an open mind. He does. On his vacation in the summer of 2005 in the Italian Alps, for example, he spoke movingly to the priests of the Val d'Aosta about the sometimes acute problems of the divorced and remarried. But when as supreme Pontiff he is called upon to decide questions, it is a pretty safe bet that his decisions will adhere as closely as possible to the established teachings and practices of the Church and to the decisions of his 264 predecessors in the chair of Peter.

As a fitting conclusion to the revised edition of a book for which we long, long ago chose the title, *The Pope, the Council, and the Mass*, we need to take brief note of how Pope Benedict XVI is thinking and speaking about the Second Vatican Council today. We have noted already, it is quite well known, that the young Father Joseph Ratzinger first came into prominence as a theologian while serving as the *peritus* at the Council of the Archbishop of Cologne, Cardinal Joseph Frings, who was himself one of the major movers-and-shakers at the Council. It is probably no exaggeration to say that Benedict's entire life as a priest, theologian, bishop, and Curia cardinal was framed by his early experience at the Council, and, subsequently, by the teachings and rulings of the Council contained in the sixteen documents of Vatican II. No prominent churchman has been more of a "man of the Council" than this famously "orthodox" German theologian and prelate. As Pope we should not expect him to be anything else.

Thus, it was not at all surprising for those who have followed his work closely that Benedict XVI, in his initial Message to the Cardinals delivered the day after his election on April 20, 2005, declared his wish "to confirm my determination to continue to put the Second Vatican Council into practice, following in the footsteps of my predecessors and in faithful continuity with the 2000-year tradition of the Church. This very year marks the 40th anniversary of the conclusion of the Council (December 8, 1965). As the years have passed, the Conciliar Documents have lost none of their timeliness; indeed,

their teachings are proving particularly relevant to the new situation of the Church and the current globalized society.”³²

In the same address, the Pope actually spoke of the necessity of an “authoritative *re-reading* of the Second Vatican Council.”³³ In his subsequent words and actions, Pope Benedict has demonstrated that his views on the Council form an integral part of his pontificate. In his Christmas Address to the Curia on December 22, 2005, he returned again to the same theme and noted that “forty years after the Council, we can show that the positive is far greater and livelier than it appeared to be in the turbulent years around 1968. Today, we see that although the good seed developed slowly, it is nonetheless growing; and our deep gratitude for the work done by the Council is likewise growing.”³⁴ In this same Christmas Address, Benedict XVI reaches a conclusion about the Council which we too can adopt as a suitable conclusion for our own long labors on this same subject:

The Second Vatican Council, with its new definition of the relationship between the faith of the Church and certain essential elements of modern thought, has reviewed or even corrected certain historical decisions, but in this apparent discontinuity it has actually preserved and deepened her inmost nature and true identity.

The Church, both before and after the Council, was and is the same Church, one, holy, catholic, and apostolic, journeying on through time; she continues “her pilgrimage amid the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God,” proclaiming the death of the Lord until he comes (cf. *Lumen Gentium* n. 8).³⁵

32 Pope Benedict XVI, Message to the Cardinals (April 20, 2005), in *L'Osservatore Romano* (English Edition, April 27, 2005).

33 Ibid. (Emphasis added).

34 Pope Benedict XVI, Christmas Address to the Roman Curia (December 22, 2005), in *L'Osservatore Romano* (English Edition, January 4, 2006).

35 Ibid.

APPENDIX I

Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum* of Pope Paul VI

(In view of all the controversy which has surrounded both this Apostolic Constitution revising the Roman Missal, and, especially, some of the translations of it that have appeared, we have elected to reprint here an original translation. This translation was made to be reprinted here as an original translation, and officially promulgated in the Acta Apostolica Sedis no. 4, April 30, 1969, in accordance with Canon IX of the Code of Canon Law. It is thus a direct translation from the Latin version recognized as binding by the Church.)

Apostolic Constitution

The Roman Missal, revised according to the decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, is promulgated.

**Paul, Bishop,
Servant of the Servants of God,
For a Perpetual Record:**

The Roman Missal, promulgated by Our Predecessor Saint Pius V in 1570, according to the decree of the Council of Trent, is universally accepted to be among the many wonderful and useful fruits which that Holy Synod brought to the universal Church of Christ. For four centuries, not only did the priests of the Latin rite use it as the norm according to which they offered the Eucharistic Sacrifice, but preachers of the holy Gospel introduced it into almost all lands. Moreover, countless saintly men copiously nourished their piety towards God by drawing from it both readings of the Holy Scriptures and prayers, most of which were arranged in definite order by Saint Gregory the Great.

But since that time study of the sacred liturgy began to grow and to gain vigor more widely among Christian people. This, in the opinion of Our Predecessor of venerable memory, Pope Pius XII, seemed to be a most favorable indication of the providence of God towards the men of this age and also an indication of a salutary passing of the Holy Spirit through His Church. Furthermore, it seemed to clearly manifest that the

formulas of the Roman Missal should be somewhat revised, and enriched by certain additions. This same Predecessor of Ours began this work by revising the Easter Vigil and the Order of Holy Week, which constituted the first step towards adapting the Roman Missal to the new mentality of the present time.

The recent Second Vatican Ecumenical laid the foundation for a general revision of the Roman Missal by issuing the Constitution beginning with the words *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. It decreed that "the texts and rites should be so arranged that they express more clearly the sacred realities which they signify"; that "the Order of the Mass (*Ordo Missae*) should be so revised that the proper nature (*ratio*) of the individual parts and their mutual connection may be expressed more clearly, and the pious and active participation of the faithful may be facilitated"; further, that "the treasures of the Bible should be more fully opened up, so that the table of God's Word may be more richly prepared for the faithful"; and finally, that "a new rite of concelebration should be prepared and inserted into the Pontifical and the Roman Missal."

However, such a revision of the Roman Missal must in no way be thought to have been introduced hastily; for, beyond all doubt, advances made in liturgical studies over the last four centuries did prepare the way for it. After the Council of Trent, the careful examination of old codices from the Vatican Library and other places contributed not a little to that revision of the Roman Missal, as is confirmed by the Apostolic Constitution *Quo Primum* of Our Predecessor Saint Pius V. Certainly, since that time, very old additional liturgical sources have been found and published, and the liturgical formulas of the Oriental Church have been studied in greater depth. This was done so that, as many desired, such riches of doctrine and of piety should no longer be committed to dark archives, but on the contrary, by being brought into the light, should illumine and nourish the minds and souls of Christians.

Now, however, in order that We may outline at least the general features of the new composition of the Roman Missal we draw attention first to the *General Instruction*, which We used as a preface to the book, and which sets forth the new norms for celebrating the Eucharistic Sacrifice, both with regard to the rites to be performed and to the proper duties of each one present and participating; and also with

regard to the material things and necessary special arrangements for the celebration of divine worship.

One must judge the principal new characteristic of this revision to be found in the Eucharistic Prayer, as it is called. For, although in the Roman Rite the first part of this Prayer, i.e., the Preface, has employed various formulas down through the centuries, its other part, which used to be called the Canon of Action, assumed an unchanging form throughout that time (although it has been in existence since the fourth to the fifth centuries) while the Oriental Liturgies, on the contrary, admitted certain variations into their Anaphoras. Now, however, besides the fact that the Eucharistic Prayer has been greatly augmented by an abundance of Prefaces, either taken from the ancient tradition of the Roman Church or now newly composed—by which the proper parts of the mystery of salvation may be more clearly manifested, and more and richer motives for giving thanks may be furnished—We have ordained that three new Canons be added to this Eucharistic Prayer. However, both for pastoral reasons, as they are called, and so that concelebration may be facilitated, We have ordered that the words of the Lord be one and the same in every formula of the Canon. Accordingly, We will that in each Eucharistic Prayer that the formula be pronounced thus: over the bread: *“Accipite et manducate ex hoc omnes: Hoc est enim Corpus meum, quod pro vobis tradetur”*; over the chalice: *“Accipite et bibite ex eo omnes: Hic est enim calix Sanguinis mei novi et aeterni testamenti, qui pro vobis et pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum. Hoc facite in meam commemorationem.”* The words *“Mysterium fidei,”* however, have been taken out of the context of the words of Christ the Lord. Pronounced by the priest, they constitute as it were an occasion for an acclamation of the faithful.

With regard to the Ordinary of the Mass, “while rightly preserving their substance, the rites have been made more simple.” For those things were omitted “which with the passage of time came to be duplicated or were added with but little advantage,” particularly with respect to the rite of offering the bread and wine, and with respect to the rite of the breaking of the bread and the communion.

In keeping with this aim, “some things are being restored to the previous norm of the holy Fathers which injuries sustained at various times had cut off,” such as the Homily, the General Prayer or Prayer of the Faithful, and the penitential rite or rite of reconciliation with God and

brethren, which belong to the beginning of the Mass. As was fitting, the revision has restored the importance of all these things.

In accordance with what was also ordered by the Second Vatican Council, "that within a specified period of years the more preeminent parts of the Sacred Scriptures should be read to the People," the whole body of Readings to be read on Sundays has been arranged in a three-year cycle. Moreover, whenever feast days occur, it is proposed that other readings of the Epistle and Gospel be chosen, whether from the Old Testament, or, in Paschal Time, from the Acts of the Apostles. By this procedure the continuous process of the mystery of salvation manifested by the revealed word of God is more clearly illustrated. This great abundance of biblical readings by which the preeminent parts of the Sacred Scriptures are presented to the faithful on feast days is truly completed by the addition of the remaining parts of the Sacred Books, which are read on the non-feast days.

All these things have been wisely arranged in order to stimulate more and more in Christ's faithful such a hunger for the word of God that, led by the Holy Spirit, the people of the New Testament might seem as it were to be impelled towards the perfect unity of the Church. These matters being thus settled, We have, indeed, great confidence that both priests and faithful will prepare their souls with more holiness for the Lord's Supper, and that, meditating more deeply on the Sacred Scripture, they will daily be more richly nourished by the words of the Lord. Briefly, then, let it follow, in accordance with the admonition of the Second Vatican Council, that the sacred writings be regarded by all as a definite perennial source of spiritual life, as the principal foundation (*argumentum*) of the Christian doctrine handed down, and, indeed, as the quintessence of all theological training.

In this revision of the Roman Missal, however, not only have the three parts of which We have spoken up to now been changed—i.e., the Eucharistic Prayer, the Order of the Mass and the Order of Readings—but also other parts have likewise been examined and considerably altered, i.e., the Proper of Seasons, the Proper of the Saints, the Common of the Saints, Ritual Masses, and Votive Masses, as they are called. In these changes a certain special diligence has been employed with regard to the prayers, which have not only been increased in number, as a new response to the new requirements of these times, but also the oldest prayers have been restored to accord with the ancient texts. From this it came about

that for each day of the principal liturgical seasons, namely, Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter, a different daily prayer has been added.

As for the rest, although the text of the Roman Gradual, at least as regards the chant, will not have been changed, nevertheless, both the Responsorial Psalm, about which Saint Augustine and Saint Leo the Great often made mention, and also the Introit and Communion Antiphons to be used in non-sung Masses, have been revised where suitable.

Finally, it now seems good to Us to conclude with an important point about the things which We have set forth here concerning the new Roman Missal. Since Our Predecessor Saint Pius V promulgated the original edition of the Roman Missal, it has represented to the Christian people, as it were, an instrument of liturgical unity and likewise a monument of genuine religious worship in the Church. By no means do We wish differently; although, in accordance with the prescription of the Second Vatican Council, We have admitted into the new Missal "legitimate variations and adaptations," We nevertheless trust that nothing will be otherwise, but that this also will be accepted by Christ's faithful as an aid to proving and confirming the mutual unity of all, so that by its strength, in so many different languages, one and the same prayer of all will ascend everywhere, more fragrant than incense, to the Heavenly Father, through our High Priest, Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit.

What We have commanded by this Constitution of Ours will begin to take effect from the thirtieth day of next November, this year, that is, from the First Sunday of Advent.

We will, moreover, that these statutes and prescriptions of Ours be firm and efficacious both now and in the future, notwithstanding, as far as is necessary, Apostolic Constitutions and Ordinances issued by Our Predecessors, and other prescriptions, even those worthy of special mention and derogation.

Given at Rome, at the See of Saint Peter, the third day of the month of April, Holy Thursday, in the year 1969, the sixth of Our Pontificate.

APPENDIX II

Two General Audiences of Pope Paul VI on the Mass

(Pope Paul VI explained to the world his reasons for revising the Roman Missal. His public explanation was principally contained in two of his General Audiences, those of November 19, 1969, and November 26, 1969. Both of these addresses are reprinted below.)

“The Mass is the Same”

Address of Pope Paul VI to a General Audience, November 19, 1969.

Our Dear Sons and Daughters:

1. We wish to draw your attention to an event about to occur in the Latin Catholic Church: the introduction of the liturgy of the new rite of the Mass. It will become obligatory in Italian dioceses from the First Sunday of Advent, which this year falls on November 30. The Mass will be celebrated in a rather different manner from that in which we have been accustomed to celebrate it in the last four centuries, from the reign of Saint Pius V, after the Council of Trent, down to the present.

2. This change has something astonishing about it, something extraordinary. This is because the Mass is regarded as the traditional and untouchable expression of our religious worship and the authenticity of our faith. We ask ourselves, how could such a change be made? What effect will it have on those who attend Holy Mass? Answers will be given to these questions, and to others like them, arising from this innovation. You will hear the answers in all the Churches. They will be amply repeated there and in all religious publications, in all schools where Christian doctrine is taught. We exhort you to pay attention to them. In that way you will be able to get a clearer and deeper idea of the stupendous and mysterious notion of the Mass.

3. But in this brief and simple discourse We will try only to relieve your minds of the first, spontaneous difficulties which this change arouses. We will do so in relation to the first three questions which immediately occur to mind because of it.

4. How could such a change be made? Answer: It is due to the will expressed by the Ecumenical Council held not long ago. The Council decreed: "The rite of the Mass is to be revised in such a way that the intrinsic nature and purpose of its several parts, as also the connection between them, can be more clearly manifested, and that devout and active participation by the faithful can be more easily accomplished.

5. "For this purpose the rites are to be simplified, while due care is taken to preserve their substance. Elements which, with the passage of time, came to be duplicated, or were added with but little advantage, are now to be discarded. Where opportunity allows or necessity demands, other elements which have suffered injury through accidents of history are now to be restored to the earlier norm of the Holy Fathers" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* no. 50).

6. The reform which is about to be brought into being is therefore a response to an authoritative mandate from the Church. It is an act of obedience. It is an act of coherence of the Church with herself. It is a step forward for her authentic tradition. It is a demonstration of fidelity and vitality, to which we all must give prompt assent.

7. It is not an arbitrary act. It is not a transitory or optional experiment. It is not some dilettante's improvisation. It is a law. It has been thought out by authoritative experts of sacred Liturgy; it has been discussed and meditated upon for a long time. We shall do well to accept it with joyful interest and put it into practice punctually, unanimously and carefully.

8. This reform puts an end to uncertainties, to discussions, to arbitrary abuses. It calls us back to that uniformity of rites and feeling proper to the Catholic Church, the heir and continuation of that first Christian community, which was all "one single heart and a single soul" (Acts 4:32). The choral character of the Church's prayer is one of the strengths of her unity and her catholicity. The change about to be made must not break up that choral character or disturb it. It ought to confirm it and make it resound with a new spirit, the spirit of her youth.

9. The second question is: What exactly are the changes?

10. You will see for yourselves that they consist of many new directions for celebrating the rites. Especially at the beginning, these will call for a certain amount of attention and care. Personal devotion and community sense will make it easy and pleasant to observe these new rules. But keep this clearly in mind: Nothing has been changed of the substance of our traditional Mass. Perhaps some may allow themselves to be carried away

by the impression made by some particular ceremony or additional rubric, and thus think that they conceal some alteration or diminution of truths which were acquired by the Catholic faith forever, and are sanctioned by it. They might come to believe that the equation between the law of prayer, *lex orandi*, and the law of faith, *lex credendi*, is compromised as a result.

11. It is not so. Absolutely not. Above all, because the rite and the relative rubric are not in themselves a dogmatic definition. Their theological qualification may vary in different degrees according to the liturgical context to which they refer. They are gestures and terms relating to a religious action—experienced and living—of an indescribable mystery of divine presence, not always expressed in a universal way. Only theological criticism can analyze this action and express it in logically satisfying doctrinal formulas. The Mass of the new rite is and remains the same Mass we have always had. If anything, its sameness has been brought out more clearly in some respects.

12. The unity of the Lord's Supper, of the Sacrifice on the cross of the re-presentation and the renewal of both in the Mass, is inviolably affirmed and celebrated in the new rite just as they were in the old. The Mass is and remains the memorial of Christ's Last Supper. At that supper the Lord changed the bread and wine into His Body and Blood, and instituted the Sacrifice of the New Testament. He willed that the Sacrifice should be identically renewed by the power of His Priesthood, conferred on the Apostles. Only the manner of offering is different, namely, an unbloody and sacramental manner; and it is offered in perennial memory of Himself, until His final return (cf. De La Taille, *Mysterium Fidei*, Elucid. IX).

13. In the new rite you will find the relationship between the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist, strictly so called, brought out more clearly, as if the latter were the practical response to the former (cf. Bouyer). You will find how much the assembly of the faithful is called upon to participate in the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice, and how in the Mass they are and fully feel themselves "the Church." You will also see other marvelous features of our Mass. But do not think that these things are aimed at altering its genuine and traditional essence.

14. Rather, try to see how the Church desires to give greater efficacy to her liturgical message through this new and more expansive liturgical language; how she wishes to bring home the message to each of her faithful, and to the whole body of the People of God, in a more direct and pastoral way.

15. In like manner We reply to the third question: What will be the results of this innovation? The results expected, or rather desired, are that the faithful will participate in the liturgical mystery with more understanding, in a more practical, a more enjoyable and a more sanctifying way. That is, they will hear the Word of God, which lives and echoes down the centuries and in our individual souls; and they will likewise share in the mystical reality of Christ's sacramental and propitiatory sacrifice.

16. So do not let us talk about "the new Mass." Let us rather speak of the "new epoch" in the Church's life. With Our Apostolic Benediction.

(Reprinted from the English Edition of *L'Osservatore Romano*, November 27, 1969)

Changes in Mass for Greater Apostolate
Address of Pope Paul VI to a General Assembly, November 26, 1969

Our Dear Sons and Daughters;

1. We ask you to turn your minds once more to the liturgical innovation of the new rite of the Mass. This new rite will be introduced into our celebration of the holy Sacrifice starting from Sunday next which is the first of Advent, November 30. [This was for Italy.]

2. A new rite of the Mass: a change in a venerable tradition that has gone on for centuries. This is something that affects our hereditary religious patrimony, which seemed to enjoy the privilege of being untouchable and settled. It seemed to bring the prayer of our forefathers and our saints to our lips and to give us the comfort of feeling faithful to our spiritual past, which we kept alive to pass it on to the generations ahead.

3. It is at such a moment as this that we get a better understanding of the value of historical tradition and the communion of the saints. This change will affect the ceremonies of the Mass. We shall become aware, perhaps with some feeling of annoyance, that the ceremonies at the altar are no longer being carried out with the same words and gestures to which we were accustomed—perhaps so much accustomed that we no longer took any notice of them. This change also touches the faithful. It is intended to interest each one of those present, to draw them out of their customary personal devotions or their usual torpor.

4. We must prepare for this many-sided inconvenience. It is the kind of upset caused by every novelty that breaks in on our habits. We shall

notice that pious persons are disturbed most, because they have their own respectable way of hearing Mass, and they will feel shaken out of their usual thoughts and obliged to follow those of others. Even priests may feel some annoyance in this respect.

5. So what is to be done on this special and historical occasion? First of all, we must prepare ourselves. This novelty is no small thing. We should not let ourselves be surprised by the nature, or even the nuisance, of its exterior forms. As intelligent persons and conscientious faithful we should find out as much as we can about this innovation. It will not be hard to do so, because of the many fine efforts being made by the Church and by publishers. As We said on another occasion, we shall do well to take into account the motives for this grave change. The first is obedience to the Council. That obedience now implies obedience to the Bishops, who interpret the Council's prescription and put them into practice.

6. This first reason is not simply canonical—relating to an external precept. It is connected with the charism of the liturgical act. In other words it is linked with the power and efficacy of the Church's prayer, the most authoritative utterance of which comes from the Bishop. This is also true of priests, who help the Bishop in his ministry, and like him act *in persona Christi* (cf. *Saint Ign. Ad Eph. I,V*). It is Christ's will, it is the breath of the Holy Spirit which calls the Church to make this change. A prophetic moment is occurring in the mystical body of Christ, which is the Church. This moment is shaking the Church, arousing it, obliging it to renew the mysterious art of its prayer.

7. The other reason for the reform is this renewal of prayer. It is aimed at associating the assembly of the faithful more closely and more effectively with the official rite, that of the Word and that of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, that constitutes the Mass. For the faithful are also invested with the "royal priesthood"; that is, they are qualified to have supernatural conversation with God.

8. It is here that the greatest newness is going to be noticed, the newness of language. No longer Latin, but the spoken language will be the principal language of the Mass. The introduction of the vernacular will certainly be a great sacrifice for those who know the beauty, the power and the expressive sacrality of Latin. We are parting with the speech of Christian centuries; we are becoming like profane intruders in the literary preserve of sacred utterance. We will lose a great part of that stupendous and incomparable artistic and spiritual thing, the Gregorian chant.

9. We have reason indeed for regret, reason almost for bewilderment. What can we put in the place of that language of the angels? We are giving up something of priceless worth. But why? What is more precious than these loftiest of our Church's values?

10. The answer will seem banal, prosaic. Yet it is a good answer, because it is human, because it is apostolic.

11. Understanding of prayer is worth more than the silken garments in which it is royally dressed. Participation by the people is worth more—particularly participation by modern people, so fond of plain language which is easily understood and converted into everyday speech.

12. If the divine Latin language kept us apart from the children, from youth, from the world of labor and of affairs, if it were a dark screen, not a clear window, would it be right for us fishers of souls to maintain it as the exclusive language of prayer and religious intercourse? What did Saint Paul have to say about that? Read Chapter 14 of the first letter to the Corinthians: "In Church I would rather speak five words with my mind, in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue" (1 Cor. 14:19).

13. Saint Augustine seems to be commenting on this when he says, "Have no fear of teachers, so long as all are instructed" (P. L. 38, 228, *Serm.* 37; cf. also *Serm.* 229, p. 1371). But, in any case, the new rite of the Mass provides that the faithful "should be able to sing together, in Latin, at least the parts of the Ordinary of the Mass, especially the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, the Our Father" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* n. 19).

14. But, let us bear this well in mind, for our counsel and our comfort: the Latin language will not thereby disappear. It will continue to be the noble language of the Holy See's official acts; it will remain as the means of teaching in ecclesiastical studies and as the key to the patrimony of our religious, historical and human culture. If possible, it will reflourish in splendour.

15. Finally, if we look at the matter properly we shall see that the fundamental outline of the Mass is still the traditional one, not only theologically but also spiritually. Indeed, if the rite is carried out as it ought to be, the spiritual aspect will be found to have greater richness. The greater simplicity of the ceremonies, the variety and abundance of scriptural texts, the joint acts of the ministers, the silences which will mark various deeper moments in the rite, will all help to bring this out.

16. But two indispensable requirements above all will make that richness clear: a profound participation by every single one present, and an outpouring of spirit in community charity. These requirements will help

to make the Mass more than ever a school of spiritual depth and a peaceful but demanding school of Christian sociology. The soul's relationship with Christ and with the brethren thus attains new and vital intensity. Christ, the victim and the priest, renews and offers up his redeeming sacrifice through the ministry of the Church in the symbolic rite of his last supper. He leaves us his body and blood under the appearances of bread and wine, for our personal and spiritual nourishment, for our fusion in the unity of his redeeming love and his immortal life.

17. But there is still a practical difficulty, which the excellence of the sacred renders not a little important. How can we celebrate this new rite when we have not yet got a complete missal, and there are still so many uncertainties about what to do?

18. To conclude, it will be helpful to read to you some directions from the competent office, namely the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship. Here they are:

As regards the obligation of the rite:

- 1) For the Latin text: Priests who celebrate in Latin, in private or also in public, in cases provided for by the legislation, may use either the Roman Missal or the new rite until November 28, 1971.

If they use the Roman Missal, they may nevertheless make use of the three new anaphoras and the Roman Canon, having regard to the provisions respecting the last text (omission of some saints, conclusions, etc.). They may moreover recite the readings and the prayer of the faithful in the vernacular.

If they use the new rite, they must follow the official text, with the concessions as regards the vernacular indicated above.

- 2) For the vernacular text. In Italy, all those who celebrate in the presence of the people from November 30 next, must use the *Rito della Messa* published by the Italian Episcopal Conference or by another National Conference.

On feast days readings shall be taken: either from the Lectionary published by the Italian Center for Liturgical Action, or from the Roman Missal for feast days, as in use heretofore.

Appendix II

On ferial days the ferial Lectionary published three years ago shall continue to be used.

No problem arises for those who celebrate in private, because they must celebrate in Latin. If a priest celebrates in the vernacular by special indult, as regards the texts, he shall follow what was said above for the Mass with the people; but for the rite he shall follow the *Ordo* published by the Italian Episcopal Conference.

19. In every case, and at all times, let us remember that “the Mass is a Mystery to be lived in a death of Love. Its divine reality surpasses all words. . . . It is the Action par excellence, the very act of our Redemption, in the Memorial which makes it present” (Zundel). With Our Apostolic Benediction.

(Reprinted from the English edition of *L'Osservatore Romano*, December 4, 1969)

APPENDIX III

Apostolic Constitution *Quo Primum* of Pope St. Pius V

From the very first, upon Our elevation to the chief Apostleship, We gladly turned our mind and energies and directed all our thoughts to those matters which concerned the preservation of a pure liturgy, and We strove with God's help, by every means in our power, to accomplish this purpose. For, besides other decrees of the sacred Council of Trent, there were stipulations for Us to revise and re-edit the sacred books: the Catechism, the Missal, and the Breviary. With the Catechism published for the instruction of the faithful, by God's help, and the Breviary thoroughly revised for the worthy praise of God, in order that the Missal and Breviary may be in perfect harmony, as is fitting and proper—for it is most becoming that there be in the Church only one appropriate manner of reciting the Psalms and only one rite for the celebration of Mass—We deemed it necessary to give our immediate attention to what still remained to be done, viz., the re-editing of the Missal as soon as possible.

Hence, We decided to entrust this work to learned men of our selection. They very carefully collated all their work with the ancient codices in Our Vatican Library and with reliable, preserved or emended codices from elsewhere. Besides this, these men consulted the works of ancient and approved authors concerning the same sacred rites; and thus they have restored the Missal itself to the original form and rite of the holy Fathers. When this work had been gone over numerous times and further emended, after serious study and reflection, We commanded that the finished product be printed and published as soon as possible, so that all might enjoy the fruits of this labor; and thus, priests would know which prayers to use and which rites and ceremonies they were required to observe from now on in the celebration of Masses.

Let all everywhere adopt and observe what has been handed down by the Holy Roman Church, the Mother and Teacher of the other churches, and let Masses not be sung or read according to any other formula than that of this Missal published by Us. This ordinance applies henceforth, now, and forever, throughout all the provinces of the Christian world, to all patriarchates, cathedral churches, collegiate and parish churches, be they

secular or religious, both of men and of women—even of military orders—and of churches and chapels without a specific congregation in which conventual Masses are sung aloud in choir or read privately in accord with the rites and customs of the Roman Church. This Missal is to be used by all churches, even by those which in their authorization are made exempt, whether by Apostolic indult, custom, or privilege, or even if by oath or official confirmation of the Holy See, or have their rights and faculties guaranteed to them by any other manner whatsoever.

This new rite alone is to be used unless approval of the practice of saying Mass differently was given at the very time of the institution and confirmation of the church by the Apostolic See at least 200 years ago, or unless there has prevailed a custom of a similar kind which had been continuously followed for a period of not less than 200 years, in which cases We in no wise rescind their above-mentioned prerogative or custom. However, if this Missal, which we have seen fit to publish, be more agreeable to these latter, We grant them permission to celebrate Mass according to its rite, provided they have the consent of their bishop or prelate or their whole Chapter, everything else to the contrary notwithstanding.

All other of the churches referred to above, however, are hereby denied the use of other missals which are to be discontinued entirely and absolutely; whereas, by this present Constitution, which will be valid henceforth, now, and forever, We order and enjoin that nothing must be added to Our recently published Missal, nothing omitted from it, nor anything whatsoever be changed within it under the penalty of Our displeasure.

We specifically command each and every patriarch, administrator, and all other persons of whatever ecclesiastical dignity they may be, be they even cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, or possessed of any other rank or preeminence, and We order them in virtue of holy obedience to chant or to read the Mass according to the rite and manner and norm herewith laid down by Us, hereafter, to discontinue and completely discard all other rubrics and rites of other missals, however ancient, which they have customarily followed; and they must not in celebrating Mass presume to introduce any ceremonies or recite any prayers other than those contained in this Missal.

Furthermore, by these presents, in virtue of Our Apostolic authority, We grant and concede in perpetuity that, for the chanting or reading of

the Mass in any church whatsoever, this Missal is hereafter to be followed absolutely, without any scruple of conscience or fear of incurring any penalty, judgment, or censure and may freely and lawfully be used. Nor are superiors, administrators, canons, chaplains and other secular priests, or religious, of whatever order or by whatever title designated, obliged to celebrate the Mass otherwise than as enjoined by Us. We likewise declare and ordain that no one whosoever is to be forced or coerced to alter this Missal, and that this present document cannot be revoked or modified, but remain always valid and retain its full force—notwithstanding the previous constitutions or edicts of provincial or synodal councils, and notwithstanding the practice and custom of the aforesaid churches, established by long and immemorial prescription—except, however, if of more than two hundred years' standing.

It is Our will, therefore, and by the same authority, We decree that after We publish this constitution and the edition of this Missal, the priests of the Roman Curia are, after thirty days, obliged to chant or read the Mass according to it; all others south of the Alps, after three months; and that those beyond the Alps either within six months or whenever the Missal is available for sale. Wherefore, in order that the Missal be preserved incorrupt throughout the whole world and kept free of flaws or errors, the penalty for nonobservance for printers, whether mediately or immediately subject to Our dominion, and that of the Holy Roman Church, will be forfeiting of their books and a fine of one hundred gold ducats, payable *ipso facto* to the Apostolic Treasury. Further, as for those located in other parts of the world, the penalty is excommunication *latae sententiae* [i.e., imposed by an ecclesiastical tribunal], and such other penalties as may in Our judgment be imposed; and We decree by this law that they must not dare or presume either to print or to publish and sell, or in any way to accept books of this nature without Our approval and consent, or without the express consent of the Apostolic Commissaries of those places, who will be appointed by Us. Said printer must receive a standard Missal from the aforementioned Apostolic Commissary to serve as a model for subsequent copies, which, when made, must be compared with the standard Missal and agree faithfully with it and in no wise vary from the Roman Missal of the large type.

Accordingly, since it would be difficult for this present pronouncement to be sent to all parts of the Christian world and simultaneously come to

light everywhere, We direct that it be, as usual, posted and published at the doors of the Basilica of the Prince of the Apostles, also at the Apostolic Chancery, and on the street at Campo Flora; furthermore, We direct that printed copies of this same edict signed by a notary public and made official by an ecclesiastical dignitary possess the same indubitable validity everywhere and in every nation, as if Our manuscript were shown there.

Therefore, no one whosoever is permitted to alter this letter or heedlessly to venture to go contrary to this notice of Our permission, statute, ordinance, command, precept, grant, indult, declaration, will, decree, and prohibition. Should anyone, however, presume to commit such an act, he should know that he will incur the wrath of Almighty God and of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul.

Given at Saint Peter's in the year of the Lord's Incarnation, 1570, on the 14th day of July of the Fifth year of Our Pontificate.

APPENDIX IV

Pope Paul VI's Letter to Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre

(This letter was sent to Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre one month after he visited the pope on September 11, 1976. The archbishop had rejected parts of the Vatican II decrees and some of the subsequent post-conciliar enactments of the Holy See and had been the object of widespread publicity as he celebrated Tridentine Masses in various parts of Europe.

In June, 1976, the archbishop had defied a direct order from the pope not to ordain seminarians at the seminary he founded in Ecône, Switzerland. In this letter, the Pope told the archbishop that while pluralism in the Church is legitimate, it must be a licit pluralism rooted in obedience. The Pope said the archbishop, rather than practicing obedience, had propagated and organized a rebellion. This, he added, "is the essential issue" in the archbishop's regard.

In this letter, the Pope outlined his conditions for rectifying matters, including a call for a declaration from the archbishop affirming adherence to Vatican II, and a declaration that would have, among other things, retracted accusations or insinuations leveled against the Pope.

The text of the Pope's letter has been taken from Origins, NC Documentary Service: December 16, 1976.)

When We received you in audience on last September 11 at Castel Gandolfo, We let you freely express your position and your desires, even though the various aspects of your case were already well known to Us personally. The memory that We still have of your zeal for the faith and the apostolate, as well as of the good you have accomplished in the past at the service of the church, made Us and still makes Us hope that you will once again become an edifying subject in full ecclesial communion. After the particularly serious actions that you have performed, We have once more asked you to reflect before God concerning your duty.

We have waited a month. The attitude to which your words and acts publicly testify does not seem to have changed. It is true that We have before Us your letter of September 16, in which you affirm: "A common point unites us: the ardent desire to see the cessation of all the abuses that

disfigure the church. How I wish to collaborate in this salutary work, with Your Holiness and under Your authority, so that the church may recover her true countenance.”

How must these few words to which your response is limited—and which in themselves are positive—be interpreted? You speak as if you have forgotten your scandalous words and gestures against ecclesial communion—words and gestures that you have never retracted! You do not manifest repentance, even for the cause of your suspension *a divinis*. You do not explicitly express your acceptance of the authority of the Second Vatican Council and of the Holy See—and this constitutes the basis of the problem—and you continue in those personal works of yours which the legitimate authority has expressly ordered you to suspend. Ambiguity results from the duplicity of your language. On Our part, as We promised you, We are herewith sending you the conclusion of Our reflections.

1. In practice you put yourself forward as the defender and spokesman of the faithful and of priests “torn apart by what is happening in the church,” thus giving the sad impression that the Catholic faith and the essential values of tradition are not sufficiently respected and lived in a portion of the people of God, at least in certain countries. But in your interpretations of the facts and in the particular role that you assign yourself, as well as in the way in which you accomplish this role, there is something that misleads the people of God and deceives souls of good will who are justly desirous of fidelity and of spiritual and apostolic progress.

Deviations in the faith or in sacramental practice are certainly very grave, wherever they occur. For a long period of time they have been the object of Our full doctrinal and pastoral attention. Certainly one must not forget the positive signs of spiritual renewal or of increased responsibility in a good number of Catholics, or the complexity of the cause of the crisis: the immense change in today’s world affects believers at the edge of their being, and renders ever more necessary apostolic concern for those “who are far away.”

But it remains true that some priests and members of the faithful mask with the name “conciliar” those personal interpretations and erroneous practices that are injurious, even scandalous, and at times sacrilegious. But these abuses cannot be attributed either to the Council itself or to the reforms that have legitimately issued therefrom, but rather to a lack of authentic fidelity in their regard. You want to convince the faithful that

the proximate cause of the crisis is more than a wrong interpretation of the Council and that it flows from the Council itself.

Moreover, you act as if you had a particular role in this regard. But the mission of discerning and remedying the abuses is first of all Ours; it is the mission of all the bishops who work together with Us. Indeed We do not cease to raise our Voice against these excesses: Our discourse to the consistory of last May 21 repeated this in clear terms. More than anyone else We hear the suffering of distressed Christians, and We respond to the cry of the faithful longing for faith and the spiritual life. This is not the place to remind you, brother, of all the acts of Our pontificate that testify to Our constant concern to ensure for the church fidelity to the true tradition, and to enable her with God's grace to face the present and future.

Finally, your behavior is contradictory. You want, so you say, to remedy the abuses that disfigure the church; you regret that authority in the church is not sufficiently respected; you wish to safeguard authentic faith, esteem for the ministerial priesthood and fervor for the eucharist in its sacrificial and sacramental fullness. Such zeal would, in itself, merit our encouragement, since it is a question of exigencies which, together with evangelization and the unity of Christians, remain at the heart of Our preoccupations and of Our mission.

But how can you at the same time, in order to fulfill this role, claim that you are obliged to act contrary to the recent Council in opposition to your brethren in the episcopate, to distrust the Holy See itself—which you call the “Rome of the neo-modernist and neo-Protestant tendency”—and to set yourself up in open disobedience to Us? If you truly want to work “under Our authority,” as you affirm in your last private letter, it is immediately necessary to put an end to these ambiguities and contradictions.

2. Let us come now to the more precise requests which you formulated during the audience of September 11. You would like to see recognized the right to celebrate Mass in various places of worship according to the Tridentine rite. You wish also to continue to train candidates for the priesthood according to your criteria, “as before the Council,” in seminaries apart, as at Ecône. But behind these questions and other similar ones, which We shall examine later on in detail, it is truly necessary to see the intricacy of the problem: and the problem is theological. For these questions have become concrete ways of expressing an ecclesiology that is warped in essential points.

What is indeed at issue is the question—which must truly be called fundamental—of your clearly proclaimed refusal to recognize in its whole, the authority of the Second Vatican Council and that of the pope. This refusal is accompanied by an action that is oriented towards propagating and organizing what must indeed, unfortunately, be called a rebellion. This is the essential issue, and it is truly untenable.

Is it necessary to remind you that you are Our brother in the episcopate and moreover—a fact that obliges you to remain even more closely united to the See of Peter—that you have been named an assistant at the papal throne? Christ has given the supreme authority in his Church to Peter and to the apostolic college, that is, to the Pope and to the college of bishops *una cum Capite*.

In regard to the pope, every Catholic admits that the words of Jesus to Peter determine also the charge of Peter's legitimate successors: "... whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven" (Mt. 16:19); "... feed my sheep" (Jn. 21:17); "... confirm your brethren" (Lk. 22:32). And the First Vatican Council specified in these terms the assent due to the sovereign pontiff: "The pastors of every rank and of every rite and the faithful, each separately and all together, are bound by the duty or hierarchical subordination and of true obedience, not only in questions of faith and morals, but also in those that touch upon the discipline and government of the Church throughout the entire world. Thus, by preserving the unity of communion and of profession of faith with the Roman pontiff, the church is a single flock under one pastor. Such is the doctrine of Catholic truth, from which no one can separate himself without danger for his faith and his salvation" (Dogmatic Constitution *Pastor Aeternus*, Ch. 3, DZ 3060).

Concerning bishops united with the sovereign pontiff, their power with regard to the universal church is solemnly exercised in the ecumenical councils, according to the words of Jesus to the body of the apostles: "... whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven" (Mt. 18:18). And now in your conduct you refuse to recognize, as must be done, these two ways in which supreme authority is exercised.

Each bishop is indeed an authentic teacher for preaching to the people entrusted to him that faith which must guide their thoughts and conduct and dispel the errors that menace the flock. But, by their nature, "the charges of teaching and governing . . . cannot be exercised except in hierarchical communion with the head of the college and with its

members" (Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 21; cf. also 25). *A fortiori*, a single bishop without a canonical mission does not have *in actu expedito ad agendum*, the faculty of deciding in general what the rule of faith is or of determining what tradition is. In practice you are claiming that you alone are the judge of what tradition embraces.

You say that you are subject to the Church and faithful to tradition by the sole fact that you obey certain norms of the past that were decreed by the predecessor of him to whom God has today conferred the powers given to Peter. That is to say, on this point also, the concept of "tradition" that you invoke is distorted.

Tradition is not a rigid and dead notion, a fact of a certain static sort which at a given moment of history blocks the life of this active organism which is the Church, that is, the mystical body of Christ. It is up to the pope and to councils to exercise judgment in order to discern in the traditions of the Church that which cannot be renounced without infidelity to the Lord and to the Holy Spirit—the deposit of faith—and that which, on the contrary, can and must be adapted to facilitate the prayer and the mission of the Church throughout a variety of times and places, in order better to translate the divine message into the language of today and better to communicate it, without an unwarranted surrender of principles.

Hence tradition is inseparable from the living magisterium of the Church, just as it is inseparable from sacred scripture. "Sacred tradition, sacred scripture and the magisterium of the church. . . . are so linked and joined together that one of these realities cannot exist without the others, and that all of them together, each in its own way, effectively contribute under the action of the Holy Spirit to the salvation of souls" (Constitution *Dei Verbum*, 10).

With the special assistance of the Holy Spirit, the popes and the ecumenical councils have acted in this common way. And it is precisely this that the Second Vatican Council did. Nothing that was decreed in this Council, or in the reforms that we enacted in order to put the Council into effect, is opposed to what the 2,000 year-old tradition of the Church considers as fundamental and immutable. We are the guarantor of this, not in virtue of Our personal qualities but in virtue of the charge which the Lord has conferred upon Us as legitimate successor of Peter, and in virtue of the special assistance that He has promised to Us as well as to Peter: "I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail" (Lk. 22:32). The universal episcopate is guarantor with us of this.

Again, you cannot appeal to the distinction between what is dogmatic and what is pastoral to accept certain texts of this Council and to refuse others. Indeed, not everything in the Council requires an assent of the same nature: only what is affirmed by definitive acts as an object of faith or as a truth related to faith requires an assent of faith. But the rest also forms part of the solemn magisterium of the Church to which each member of the faithful owes a confident acceptance and a sincere application.

You say moreover that you do not always see how to reconcile certain texts of the Council, or certain dispositions which We have enacted in order to put the Council into practice, with the wholesome tradition of the Church and in particular with the Council of Trent or the affirmations of Our predecessors. These are for example: the responsibility of the college of bishops united with the sovereign pontiff, the new *Ordo Missae*, ecumenism, religious freedom, the attitude of dialogue, evangelization in the modern world. . . .

It is not the place, in this letter, to deal with each of these problems. The precise tenor of the documents, with the totality of its nuances and its context, the authorized explanations, the detailed and objective commentaries which have been made, are of such a nature to enable you to overcome these personal difficulties. Absolutely secure counselors, theologians and spiritual directors would be able to help you even more, with God's enlightenment, and We are ready to facilitate this fraternal assistance for you.

But how can an interior personal difficulty—a spiritual drama which We respect—permit you to set yourself up publicly as a judge of what has been legitimately adopted, practically with unanimity, and knowingly to lead a portion of the faithful into your refusal? If justifications are useful in order to facilitate intellectual acceptance—and We hope that the troubled or reticent faithful will have the wisdom, honesty and humanity to accept those justifications that are widely placed at their disposal—they are not in themselves necessary for the assent of obedience that is due to the Ecumenical Council and to the decisions of the pope. It is the ecclesial sense that is at issue.

In effect you and those who are following you are endeavoring to come to a standstill at a given moment in the life of the Church. By the same token you refuse to accept the living Church, which is the Church that has always been: you break with the Church's legitimate pastors and

scorn the legitimate exercise of their charge. And so you claim not even to be affected by the orders of the pope, or by the suspension *a divinis*, as you lament “subversion” in the Church.

Is it not in this state of mind that you have ordained priests without dimissorial letters and against Our explicit command, thus creating a group of priests who are in an irregular situation in the Church and who are under grave ecclesiastical penalties? Moreover, you hold that the suspension that you have incurred applies only to the celebration of the sacraments according to the new rite, as if they were something improperly introduced into the Church, which you go so far as to call schismatic, and you think that you evade this sanction when you administer the sacraments according to the formulas of the past and against the established norms (cf. 1 Cor. 14:40).

From the same erroneous conception springs your abuse of celebrating Mass called that of Saint Pius V. You know full well that this rite had itself been the result of successive changes, and that the Roman Canon remains the first of the eucharistic prayers authorized today.

The present reform derived its *raison d'être* and its guidelines from the Council and from the historical sources of the liturgy. It enables the laity to draw greater nourishment from the word of God. Their more active participation leaves intact the unique role of the priest acting in the person of Christ. We have sanctioned this reform by Our authority, requiring that it be adopted by all Catholics.

If, in general, We have not judged it good to permit any further delays or exceptions to this adoption, it is with a view to the spiritual good and the unity of the entire ecclesiastical community, because, for Catholics of the Roman Rite, the *Ordo Missae* is a privileged sign of their unity. It is also because, in your case, the old rite is in fact the expression of a warped ecclesiology, and a ground for dispute with the Council and its reforms under the pretext that in the old rite alone are preserved, without their meaning being obscured, the true sacrifice of the Mass and the ministerial priesthood.

We cannot accept this erroneous judgment, this unjustified accusation, nor can We tolerate that the Lord's Eucharist, the sacrament of unity, should be the object of such divisions (cf. 1 Cor. 11:18), and that it should even be used as an instrument and sign of rebellion.

Of course there is room in the church for a certain pluralism, but in licit matters and in obedience. This is not understood by those who refuse

the sum total of the liturgical reform; nor indeed on the other hand by those who imperil the holiness of the real presence of the Lord and of his sacrifice. In the same way there can be no question of a priestly formation which ignores the Council.

We cannot therefore take your requests into consideration, because it is a question of acts which have already been committed in rebellion against the one true Church of God. Be assured that this severity is not dictated by a refusal to make a concession on such and such a point of discipline or liturgy, but, given the meaning and the extent of your acts in the present context, to act thus would be on Our part to accept the introduction of a seriously erroneous concept of the church and of tradition. This is why, with the full consciousness of Our duties, We say to you, brother, that you are in error. And with the full ardor of Our fraternal love, as also with all the weight of Our authority as the successor of Peter, We invite you to retract, to correct yourself and to cease from inflicting wounds upon the Church of Christ.

3. Specifically, what do We ask of you?

A.—First and foremost, a declaration that will rectify matters for Ourselves and also for the people of God who have a right to clarity and who can no longer bear without damage such equivocations.

This declaration will therefore have to affirm that you sincerely adhere to the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and to all its documents—*sensu obvio*—which were adopted by the Council fathers and approved and promulgated by Our authority. For such an adherence has always been the rule, in the Church, since the beginning, in the matter of ecumenical councils.

It must be clear that you equally accept the decisions that We have made since the Council in order to put it into effect, with the help of the departments of the Holy See; among other things, you must explicitly recognize the legitimacy of the reformed liturgy, notably of the *Ordo Missae*, and our right to require its adoption by the entirety of the Christian people.

You must also admit the binding character of the rules of canon law now in force which, for the greater part, still correspond with the content of the Code of Canon Law of Benedict XV, without excepting the part which deals with canonical penalties.

As far as concerns Our person, you will make a point of desisting from and retracting the grave accusations or insinuations which you have publicly leveled against Us, against the orthodoxy of Our faith and

Our fidelity to Our charge as the successor of Peter, and against Our immediate collaborators.

With regard to the bishops, you must recognize their authority in their respective dioceses by abstaining from preaching in those dioceses and administering the sacraments there: the Eucharist, Confirmation, Holy Orders, etc., when these bishops expressly object to your doing so.

Finally, you must undertake to abstain from all activities (such as conferences, publications, etc.) contrary to this declaration, and formally to reprove all those initiatives which may make use of your name in the face of this declaration.

It is a question here of the minimum to which every Catholic bishop must subscribe: this adherence can tolerate no compromise. As soon as you show Us that you accept its principle, We will propose the practical manner of presenting this declaration. This is the first condition in order that the suspension *a divinis* be lifted.

B.—It will then remain to solve the problem of your activity, of your works, and notably of your seminaries. You will appreciate, brother, that in view of the past and present irregularities and ambiguities affecting these works, We cannot go back on the juridical suppression of the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Pius X. This has inculcated a spirit of opposition to the Council and to its implementation such as the Vicar of Christ was endeavoring to promote.

Your declaration of November 21, 1974, bears witness to this spirit; and upon such a foundation, as Our commission of cardinals rightly judged, on May 6, 1975, one cannot build an institution or a priestly formation in conformity with the requirements of the Church of Christ. This in no way invalidates the good element in your seminaries, but one must also take into consideration the ecclesiological deficiencies of which We have spoken and the capacity of exercising a pastoral ministry in the Church of today. Faced with these unfortunately mixed realities, We shall take care not to destroy but to correct and to save as far as possible.

This is why, as supreme guarantor of the faith and of the formation of the clergy, We require you first of all to hand over to Us the responsibility of your work, and particularly for your seminaries. This is undoubtedly a heavy sacrifice for you, but it is also a test of your trust, of your obedience and it is a necessary condition in order that these seminaries, which have no canonical existence in the Church, may in the future take their place therein.

It is only after you have accepted the principle that We shall be able to provide in the best possible way for the good of all the persons involved, with the concern for promoting authentic priestly vocations and with respect for the doctrinal, disciplinary and pastoral requirements of the church. At that stage, We shall be in a position to listen with benevolence to your requests and your wishes and, together with Our departments, to take in conscience the right and opportune measures.

As for the illicitly ordained seminarians, the sanctions which they have incurred in conformity with Canon 985, 7 and 2374 can be lifted, if they give proof of a return to a better frame of mind, notably by accepting to subscribe to the declaration which We have asked of you. We count upon your sense of the Church in order to make this step easy for them.

As regards the foundations, houses of formation, “prieories” and various other institutions set up on your initiative or with your encouragement, We likewise ask you to hand them over to the Holy See, which will study their position, in its various aspects, with the local episcopate. Their survival, organization and apostolate will be subordinated, as is normal throughout the Catholic Church, to an agreement which will have to be reached, in each case, with the local bishop—*nihil sine Episcopo*—and in a spirit which respects the declaration mentioned above.

All the points which figure in this letter and to which We have given mature consideration, in consultation with the heads of the departments concerned, have been adopted by Us only out of regard for the greater good of the church. You said to Us during our conversation of September 11: “I am ready for anything, for the good of the church.” The response now lies in your hands.

If you refuse—*quod Deus avertat*—to make the declaration which is asked of you, you will remain suspended *a divinis*. On the other hand, Our pardon and the lifting of the suspension will be assured you to the extent to which you sincerely and without ambiguity undertake to fulfill the conditions of this letter and to repair the scandal caused. The obedience and the trust of which you will give proof will also make it possible for Us to study serenely with you your personal problems.

May the Holy Spirit enlighten you and guide you towards the only solution that would enable you on the one hand to rediscover the peace of your momentarily misguided conscience but also to ensure the good

of souls, to contribute to the unity of the Church which the Lord has entrusted to Our charge and to avoid the danger of a schism.

In the psychological state in which you find yourself, We realize that it is difficult for you to see clearly and very hard for you humbly to change your line of conduct: is it not therefore urgent, as in all such cases, for you to arrange a time and a place of recollection which will enable you to consider the matter with the necessary objectivity?

Fraternally, We put you on your guard against the pressures to which you could be exposed from those who wish to keep you in an untenable position, while We Ourselves, all your brothers in the episcopate and the vast majority of the faithful await finally from you that ecclesial attitude which would be to your honor.

In order to root out the abuses which we all deplore and to guarantee a true spiritual renewal, as well as the courageous evangelization to which the Holy Spirit bids us, there is needed more than ever the help and commitment to the entire ecclesial community around the pope and the bishops. Now the revolt of one side finally reaches and risks accentuating the insubordination of what you have called the "subversion" of the other side; while, without your own insubordination, you would have been able, brother, as you expressed the wish in your last letter, to help Us, in fidelity and under Our authority, to work for the advancement of the Church.

Therefore, dear brother, do not delay any longer in considering before God, with the keenest religious attention, this solemn adjuration of the humble but legitimate successor of Peter. May you measure the gravity of the hour and take the only decision that befits a son of the Church. This is Our hope, this is Our prayer.

From the Vatican, October 11, 1976.

PAULUS PP. VI

APPENDIX V

Congregation for Divine Worship Letter *Quattuor Abhinc Annos*

October 3, 1984

Four years ago, at the direction of Pope John Paul II, the bishops of the entire Church were invited to submit a report on the following topics:

- The manner in which the priests and the people of their dioceses, in observance of the decrees of the Vatican Council II, have received the Roman Missal promulgated by authority of Pope Paul VI;
 - Problems arising in connection with the implementation of the liturgical reform;
 - Opposition to the reform that may need to be overcome.
- The results of this survey were reported to all the bishops (see *Notitiae*, No. 185, December 1981).

Based on the responses received from the bishops of the world the problem of those priests and faithful who had remained attached to the so-called Tridentine rite seemed to have been almost completely resolved.

But the problem continues and the pope wishes to be responsive to such groups of priests and faithful.

Accordingly, he grants to diocesan bishops the faculty of using an indult on behalf of such priests and faithful. The diocesan bishop may allow those who are explicitly named in a petition submitted to him to celebrate Mass by use of the 1962 Roman Missal. The following norms must be observed:

1. There must be unequivocal, even public evidence that the priest and people petitioning have no ties with those who impugn the lawfulness and doctrinal soundness of the Roman Missal promulgated in 1970 by Pope Paul VI.
2. The celebration of Mass in question must take place exclusively for the benefit of those who petition it; the celebration

must be in a church or oratory designated by the diocesan bishop (but not in parish churches, unless, in extraordinary instances, the bishop allows this); the celebration may take place on those days and in those circumstances approved by the bishops whether for an individual instance or as a regular occurrence.

3. The celebration is to follow the Roman Missal of 1962 and must be in Latin.
4. In the celebration there is to be no intermingling of the rites or texts of the two missals.
5. Each bishop is to inform this congregation of the concessions he grants and, one year from the date of the present indult, of the outcome of its use.

The Pope, who is the father of the entire Church, grants this indult as a sign of his concern for all his children without prejudice to the liturgical reform that is to be observed in each ecclesiastical community.

I take this opportunity of extending my cordial good wishes in the Lord to Your Excellency.

Archbishop Augustin Mayer,
Pro-Prefect

Bishop Virgilio Noe,
Secretary

APPENDIX VI

Apostolic Letter “Ecclesia Dei” of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II Given *Motu Proprio*

1. With great affliction the Church has learned of the unlawful episcopal ordination conferred on 30 June last by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, which has frustrated all the efforts made during the previous years to ensure the full communion with the Church of the Priestly Society of Saint Pius X founded by the same Msgr. Lefebvre. These efforts, especially intense during recent months, in which the Apostolic See has shown comprehension to the limits of the possible, were all to no avail.¹

2. This affliction was particularly felt by the Successor of Peter to whom in the first place pertains the guardianship of the unity of the Church,² even though the number of persons directly involved in these events might be few, since every person is loved by God on his own account and has been redeemed by the blood of Christ shed on the Cross for the salvation of all. The particular circumstances, both objective and subjective in which Archbishop Lefebvre acted, provide everyone with an occasion for profound reflection and for a renewed pledge of fidelity to Christ and to his Church.

3. In itself, this act was one of *disobedience* to the Roman Pontiff in a very grave matter and of supreme importance for the unity of the Church, such as is the ordination of bishops whereby the apostolic succession is sacramentally perpetuated. Hence, such disobedience—which implies in practice the rejection of the Roman primacy—constitutes a *schismatic* act.³ In performing such an act, notwithstanding the formal *canonical warning* sent to them by the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops on 17 June last, Mons. Lefebvre and the priests Bernard Fellay, Bernard Tissier de Mallerais, Richard Williamson and Alfonso de Galaretta, have incurred the grave penalty of excommunication envisaged by ecclesiastical law.⁴

1 Cf. “Introductory Note” of 16 June 1988; *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 27 June 1988, p. 1-2.

2 Cf. Vatican Council II, Const. *Pastor Aeternus*, cap. 3; DS 3060.

3 Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 751.

4 Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 1382.

4. The root of this schismatic act can be discerned in an incomplete and contradictory notion of Tradition. Incomplete, because it does not take into account the *living* character of Tradition, which, as the Second Vatican Council clearly taught, “comes from the apostles and progresses in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit. There is a growth in insight into the realities and words that passes on. This comes about in various ways. It comes through the contemplation and study of believers who ponder these things in their hearts. It comes from the intimate sense of spiritual realities which they experience. And it comes from the preaching of those who received, along with their right of succession in the episcopate, the sure charism of truth.”⁵

But especially contradictory is a notion of Tradition which opposes the universal Magisterium of the Church possessed by the Bishop of Rome and the Body of Bishops. It is impossible to remain faithful to the Tradition while breaking the ecclesial bond with him to whom, in the person of the Apostle Peter, Christ himself entrusted the ministry of unity in his Church.⁶

5. Faced with the situation that has arisen I deem it my duty to inform all the Catholic faithful of some aspects which this sad event has highlighted.

- a) The outcome of the movement promoted by Mons. Lefebvre can and must be, for all the Catholic faithful, a motive for sincere reflection concerning their own fidelity to the Church's Tradition, authentically interpreted by the ecclesiastical Magisterium, ordinary and extraordinary, especially in the Ecumenical Councils from Nicaea to Vatican II. From this reflection all should draw a renewed and efficacious conviction of the necessity of strengthening still more their fidelity by rejecting erroneous interpretations and arbitrary and unauthorized applications in matters of doctrine, liturgy, and discipline. To the bishops, especially, it pertains, by reason of their pastoral mission, to exercise the important duty of a clear-sighted vigilance full of charity and firmness, so

5 Vatican Council II Const. *Det Verbum*, n. 8. Cf. Vatican Council I, Const. *Det Filius*, cap. 4; DS 3020.

6 Cf. Mt. 16:18; Lk. 10:16; Vatican Council I, Const. *Pastor Aeternus*, cap. 3: DS 3060.

that this fidelity may be everywhere safeguarded.⁷ However, it is necessary that all the pastors and the other faithful have a new awareness, not only of the lawfulness but also of the richness for the Church of a diversity of charisms, traditions of spirituality and apostolate, which also constitutes the beauty of unity in variety: of that blended “harmony” which the earthly Church raises up to heaven under the impulse of the Holy Spirit.

- b) Moreover, I should like to remind theologians and other experts in the ecclesiastical sciences that they should feel called upon to answer in the present circumstances. Indeed, the extent and depth of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council call for a renewed commitment to deeper study in order to reveal clearly the Council’s continuity with Tradition, especially in points of doctrine which, perhaps because they are new, have not been well understood by some sections of the Church.
- c) In the present circumstances, I wish especially to make an appeal both solemn and heartfelt, paternal and fraternal, to all those who until now have been linked in various ways to the movement of Archbishop Lefebvre, that they may fulfill the grave duty of remaining united to the Vicar of Christ in the unity of the Catholic Church, and of ceasing their support in any way for that movement. Everyone should be aware that formal adherence to the schism is a grave offense against God and carries the penalty of excommunication decreed by the Church’s law.⁸ To all those Catholic faithful who feel attached to some previous liturgical and disciplinary forms of the Latin tradition, I wish to manifest my will to facilitate their ecclesial communion by means of the necessary measures to guarantee respect for their rightful aspirations. In this matter I ask for the support of bishops and of all those engaged in the pastoral ministry of the Church.

7 Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 386; Paul VI, Apost. Exhort. *Quinque iam anni*, 8 Dec. 1970; AAS 63 (1971) pp. 97-106.

8 Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 1364.

6. Taking account of the importance and complexity of the problems referred to in this document, by virtue of my Apostolic Authority, I decree the following:

- a) A *Commission* is instituted whose task it will be to collaborate with the bishops, with the Departments of the Roman Curia and with the circles concerned, for the purpose of facilitating full ecclesial communion of priests, seminarians, religious communities or individuals until now linked in various ways to the Fraternity founded by Mons. Lefebvre, who may wish to remain united to the Successor of Peter in the Catholic Church, while preserving their spiritual and liturgical traditions, in the light of the Protocol signed on 5 May last by Cardinal Ratzinger and Mons. Lefebvre;
- b) This Commission is composed of a Cardinal President and other members of the Roman Curia, in a number that will be deemed opportune according to circumstances;
- c) Moreover, respect must everywhere be shown for the feelings of all those who are attached to the Latin liturgical tradition, by a wide and generous application of the directives already issued some time ago by the Apostolic See, for the use of the Roman Missal according to the typical edition of 1962.⁹

7. As this year especially dedicated to the Blessed Virgin is now drawing to a close, I wish to exhort all to join in unceasing prayer which the Vicar of Christ, through the intercession of the Mother of the Church, addresses to the Father in the very words of the Son: "That they all may be one!"

Given at Rome, at Saint Peter's, 2 July 1988, the tenth year of the Pontificate.

Joannes Paulus II



⁹ Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship, Letter *Quattuor abhinc annos*, 3 Oct. 1984; AAS 76 (1984) pp. 1088-1089.

Congregation for Bishops Decree

Monsignor Marcel Lefebvre, Archbishop-Bishop of Tulle, notwithstanding the formal canonical warning of 17 June last and the repeated appeals to desist from his intention, has performed a schismatical act by the episcopal consecration of four priests, without pontifical mandate and contrary to the will of the Supreme Pontiff, and has therefore incurred the penalty envisaged by can. 1364, par. 1, and can. 1382 of the Code of Canon Law. Having taken account of all the juridical effects, I declare that the above-mentioned Monsignor Marcel Lefebvre, and Bernard Fellay, Bernard Tissier de Mallerais, Richard Williamson, and Alfonso de Galaretta have incurred *ipso facto* excommunication *latae sententiae* reserved to the Apostolic See. Moreover, I declare that Monsignor Antonio de Castro Mayer, Bishop emeritus of Campos, since he took part directly in the liturgical celebration as co-consecrator and adhered publicly to the schismatical act, has incurred excommunication *latae sententiae* as envisaged by can. 1364 par. 1. The priests and faithful are warned not to support the schism of Monsignor Lefebvre, otherwise they shall incur *ipso facto* the very grave penalty of excommunication.

From the Office of the Congregation for Bishops, 1 July 1988.
Bernardus Card. Gantin
Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops

Note: the above Apostolic Letter "*Ecclesia Dei Adflicta*" and the "Decree" that follows it were published in *L'Osservatore Romano* (English Edition), 11 July 1988.

APPENDIX VII

Pope John Paul II on Liturgical Abuses

(Throughout his long pontificate, there was a continual effort on the part of this successor of Peter to deal with liturgical abuses impeding the mission of the Church and to make collegiality an effective instrument for their elimination. Here are but a few excerpts from his many addresses and documents on the subject directed to the Church's bishops and faithful.)

Upon all of us who, through the grace of God, are ministers of the Eucharist, there weighs a particular responsibility for the ideas and attitudes of our brothers and sisters who have been entrusted to our pastoral care. It is our vocation to nurture, above all, by personal example, every healthy manifestation of worship toward Christ present and operative in that sacrament of love. May God preserve us from acting otherwise and weakening that worship by "becoming accustomed" to various manifestations and forms of Eucharistic worship which express a perhaps "traditional" but healthy piety, and which express above all that "sense of faith" possessed by the whole People of God, as the Second Vatican Council recalled. (*Lumen Gentium*, 12)

. . . I would like to ask forgiveness—in my own name and in the name of all of you, venerable and dear brothers in the Episcopate—for everything which, for whatever reason, through whatever human weakness, impatience or negligence, and also through the at times partial, one-sided, and erroneous application of the directives of the Second Vatican Council, may have caused scandal and disturbance concerning the interpretation of the doctrine and the veneration due this great sacrament. And I pray the Lord Jesus that in the future we may avoid in our manner of dealing with this sacred mystery anything which could weaken or disorient in any way the sense of reverence and love that exists in our faithful people. (Letter on the Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist *Dominicae Cenae*, February 24, 1980)



The Bishop's place in the Church's sanctifying mission leads him to have special concern for the observance of liturgical law in his diocese. If in some instances liturgical renewal has been seen merely in terms of external

change or adaptation, it is necessary now to place appropriate emphasis on the liturgy's transcendent character: "Every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of his Body the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 7). The spiritual vitality of your communities depends greatly on the dignified and worthy celebration of the liturgy. In all of this you need the support and help of your priests and all the faithful, but the greatest responsibility lies with you who have received the fullness of the sacrament of the priesthood. (Address to the Australian Bishops, May 22, 1993)



Others have promoted outlandish innovations, departing from the norms issued by the authority of the Apostolic See or the bishops, thus disrupting the unity of the Church and the piety of the faithful, and even on occasion contradicting matters of faith . . . Side by side with the benefits of the liturgical reform, one has to acknowledge with regret deviations of greater or lesser seriousness in its application.

On occasion there have been noted illicit omissions or additions, rites invented outside the framework of established norms; postures or songs which are not conducive to faith or to a sense of the sacred; abuses in the practice of general absolution; confusion between the ministerial priesthood, linked with Ordination, and the common priesthood of the faithful, which has its foundation in Baptism.

It cannot be tolerated that certain priests should take it upon themselves the right to compose Eucharistic Prayers or to substitute readings for texts of Sacred Scripture. Initiatives of this sort, far from being linked with the liturgical reform as such, or with the books which have issued from it, are in direct contradiction to it, disfigure it, and deprive the Christian people of the genuine treasures of the liturgy of the Church.

It is for the bishops to root out such abuses, because the regulation of the liturgy depends on the bishop within the limits of the law, and because "the life in Christ of his faithful people in some sense is derived from and depends upon him." (Apostolic Letter on the 25th Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, December 4, 1988)



To look back over what has been done in the field of liturgical renewal in the years since the Council is, first, to see many reasons for giving felt thanks and praise to the Most Holy Trinity for the marvelous awareness which has developed among the faithful of their role and responsibility in this priestly work of Christ and his Church. It is also to realize that not all changes have always and everywhere been accompanied by the necessary explanation and catechesis; as a result, in some cases, there has been a misunderstanding of the very nature of the liturgy, leading to abuses, polarization, and sometimes even grave scandal. After the experience of more than thirty years of liturgical renewal, we are well-placed to assess both the strengths and weaknesses of what has been done, in order to plot our course into the future which God has in mind for his cherished People. . . . The liturgy is subjective in that it depends radically upon what the worshippers bring to it; but it is objective in that it transcends them as the priestly act of Christ Himself, to which he associates us but which ultimately does not depend upon us. This is why it is so important that liturgical law be respected. The priest, who is the servant of the liturgy, not its inventor or producer, has a particular responsibility in this regard, lest he empty the liturgy of its true meaning or obscure its sacred character. (Address to U. S. Bishops from the states of Washington, Oregon, Montana, Idaho, and Alaska on their *ad limina* visit to Rome, October 9, 1998)



Unfortunately, alongside [positive] lights, there are also shadows. In some places the practice of Eucharistic adoration has been almost completely abandoned. In various parts of the Church abuses have occurred, leading to confusion with regard to sound faith and Catholic doctrine concerning this wonderful sacrament. At times one encounters an extremely reductive understanding of the Eucharistic mystery. Stripped of its sacrificial meaning, it is celebrated as if it were simply a fraternal banquet. Furthermore, the necessity of the ministerial priesthood, grounded in apostolic succession, is at times obscured and the sacramental nature of the Eucharist is reduced to its mere effectiveness as a form of proclamation. This has led here and there to ecumenical initiatives which, albeit well-intentioned, indulge in Eucharistic practices contrary to the discipline by which the Church expresses her faith. How can we not express profound grief at all this? The Eucharist is too great a gift to tolerate ambiguity and depreciation . . .

It is [priests'] responsibility to preside at the Eucharist "*in persona Christi*," and to provide a witness to and a service of communion not only for the community directly taking part in the celebration, but also for the Universal Church, which is a part of every Eucharist. It must be lamented that especially in the years following the post-conciliar reform, as a result of a misguided sense of creativity and adaptation, there have been a number of abuses which have been a source of suffering for many. A certain reaction against "formalism" has led some, especially in certain regions, to consider the "forms" chosen by the Church's great liturgical tradition and her Magisterium as non-binding and to introduce unauthorized innovations which are often completely inappropriate. I consider it my duty, therefore to appeal urgently that the liturgical norms for the celebration of the Eucharist be observed with great fidelity. These norms are a concrete expression of the authentically ecclesial nature of the Eucharist; this is their deepest meaning. Liturgy is never anyone's private property, be it of the celebrant or of the community in which the mysteries are celebrated. The Apostle Paul had to address fiery words to the community of Corinth because of grave shortcomings in their celebration of the Eucharist resulting in divisions (*schismata*) and the emergence of factions (*haireseis*) (cf. 1 Cor. 11:17-34). Our time, too, calls for a renewed awareness and appreciation of liturgical norms as a reflection of, and a witness to, the one Universal Church made present in every celebration of the Eucharist. Priests who faithfully celebrate Mass according to the liturgical norms, and communities which conform to those norms, quietly but eloquently demonstrate their love for the Church. Precisely to bring out more clearly this deeper meaning of liturgical norms, I have asked the competent offices of the Roman Curia to prepare a more specific document, including prescriptions of a juridical nature, on this very important subject. No one is permitted to undervalue the mystery entrusted to our hands: it is too great for anyone to feel free to treat it lightly and with disregard for its sacredness and its universality. (Encyclical Letter of John Paul II on the Church of the Eucharist *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, April 17, 2003)

APPENDIX VIII

Vatican II and Post-Conciliar Texts on the Mass as a Sacrifice

(With regard to claims by traditionalists that the Mass of Pope Paul VI is invalid as representing a radical change from traditional Catholic doctrine on the Mass, it has been thought helpful to present here the following Vatican II and post-conciliar doctrinal expositions expressing the dogmatic continuity of Catholic teaching on the Mass as Sacrifice, Sacrament, and Memorial.)

At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us (Vatican II's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* December 4, 1963).



We believe that the Mass, celebrated by the priest representing the person of Christ by virtue of the power received through the sacrament of Orders, and offered by him in the name of Christ and the members of His Mystical Body, is the Sacrifice of Calvary rendered sacramentally present on our altars. We believe that as the bread and wine consecrated by the Lord at the Last Supper were changed into His Body and His Blood which were to be offered for us on the Cross, likewise the bread and wine consecrated by the priest are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ enthroned gloriously in Heaven, and we believe that the mysterious presence of the Lord, under what continues to appear to our senses as before, is a true, real, and substantial presence.

Christ cannot be thus present in this Sacrament except by the change into His Body of the reality itself of the bread and the change into His Blood

of the reality itself of the wine, leaving unchanged only the properties of the bread and wine which our senses perceive. This mysterious change is very appropriately called by the Church *transubstantiation*. Every theological explanation which seeks some understanding of this mystery must, in order to be in accord with Catholic faith, maintain that in the reality itself, independently of our mind, the bread and wine have ceased to exist after the Consecration, so that it is the adorable Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus that from then on are really before us under the sacramental species of bread and wine, as the Lord willed it, in order to give Himself to us as food and to associate us with the unity of His Mystical Body.

The unique and indivisible existence of the Lord glorious in Heaven is not multiplied, but is rendered present by the sacrament in the many places on earth where Mass is celebrated. And this existence remains present, after the sacrifice, in the Blessed Sacrament which is, in the tabernacle, the living heart of each of our churches. And it is our very sweet duty to honor and adore in the Blessed Host which our eyes see, the Incarnate Word Whom they cannot see, and Who, without leaving Heaven, is made present before us (Paul VI, *Credo of the People of God*, nos. 24-26, June 30, 1968, issued at the closing of the "Year of Faith" to "fulfill the mandate entrusted by Christ to Peter").



The sacrificial character of the Mass was solemnly defined by the Council of Trent in accordance with the universal tradition of the Church. The Second Vatican Council has enunciated this same teaching once again, and made this highly significant comment: "At the Last Supper our Savior instituted the eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. He did this in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross until he should come again; and he wished to entrust to his beloved spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection." The Council's teaching on this point finds an enduring expression in the texts of the Mass. A sentence from the Leonine sacramentary, "whenever the memorial of this sacrifice is celebrated, the work of our redemption is accomplished," expresses succinctly the very doctrine set forth anew in suitable and accurate terms in the Eucharistic Prayers. In these the priest, during the *anamnesis* (prayer of remembrance), addresses himself to God in the name of all the people; he gives thanks to God and offers to him a holy and living

sacrifice, the Church's offering, the Victim whose death has reconciled man with God; he prays that the Body and Blood of Christ may be the acceptable sacrifice which brings salvation to the whole world.

Thus in the new [Roman] Missal the Church's rule of worship corresponds with her unchanging rule of faith. From this we learn that the sacrifice of the Cross and its sacramental renewal in the Mass are, apart from the difference in the manner of offering, one and the same sacrament; it is this sacramental renewal which Christ the Lord instituted at the Last Supper and commanded his apostles to celebrate in his memory. The Mass is therefore a sacrifice of praise, of thanksgiving, of propitiation, and of satisfaction.

In the celebration of Mass there is proclaimed the wonderful mystery of the real presence of Christ our Lord under the eucharistic species. The Second Vatican Council and other magisterial pronouncements of the Church have confirmed this truth in the same sense and the same words as those in which the Council of Trent defined it as an article of faith. It is proclaimed not only by the words of consecration whereby Christ becomes present through transubstantiation, but also by the meaning of the celebration and the several external manifestations of deep reverence and adoration occurring during the course of the eucharistic liturgy. It is this same belief which leads the Christian people to adore the wonderful sacrament by special acts of veneration on Maundy Thursday and on the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ (*Corpus Christi*) (From the Foreword (nos. 2-3) of the 1970 edition of the General Instruction on the Roman Missal (GIRM), containing principles and rubrics governing the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass).



Beginning with the Upper Room and Holy Thursday, the celebration of the Eucharist has a long history, a history as long as that of the Church. In the course of this history, the secondary elements have undergone certain changes, but there has been no change in the essence of the *mysterium* instituted by the Redeemer of the world at the Last Supper. The Second Vatican Council too brought alterations, as a result of which the present liturgy of the Mass is different in some ways from the one known before the Council. We do not intend to speak of these differences: It is better that we should now concentrate on what is essential and immutable in the Eucharistic Liturgy.

. . . this sacred rite, which is actuated in different liturgical forms, may lack some secondary elements, but it can in no way lack its essential sacred character and sacramentality, since these are willed by Christ and transmitted and regularized by the Church. Neither can this sacred rite be utilized for other ends. If separated from its distinctive sacrificial and sacramental nature, the Eucharistic mystery simply ceases to be. It admits of no “profane” imitation, an imitation that would very easily (indeed regularly) become a profanation. This must always be remembered, perhaps above all in our time, when we see a tendency to do away with the distinction between the “sacred” and “profane,” given the widespread tendency, at least in some places, to desacralize everything.

. . . the Eucharist is above all else a sacrifice. It is the sacrifice of the redemption and also the sacrifice of the new covenant, as we believe and as the Eastern churches clearly profess. “Today’s sacrifice,” the Greek Church stated centuries ago, “is like that offered once by the only-begotten Incarnate Word; it is offered by Him (now as then), since it is one and the same sacrifice” (Synod of Constantinople against Sotericum, AD January 1156 & May 1157). Accordingly, precisely by making this single sacrifice of our salvation present, man and the world are restored to God through the paschal newness of redemption. This restoration cannot cease to be: it is the foundation of the “new and eternal covenant” of God with man and of man with God. If it were missing, one would have to question both the excellence of the sacrifice of the redemption, which in fact was perfect and definitive, and also the sacrificial value of the Mass. In fact, the Eucharist, being a true sacrifice, brings about this restoration to God (Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter on the Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist *Dominicae Cenaе*, February 24, 1980, nos. 8-9).



If from the beginning Christians have celebrated the Eucharist and in a form whose substance has not changed despite the great diversity of times and liturgies, it is because we know ourselves to be bound by the command the Lord gave on the eve of his Passion: “Do this in remembrance of me” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), no. 1356). A beautiful and complete doctrinal treatment of the “Sacrament of the Eucharist” is given in CCC, nos. 1322-1419).

About The Authors

James Likoudis is a former college instructor in history and government with more than twenty years teaching experience in public and private education. An internationally known writer and lecturer in catechetics, sex education, and the liturgy, he has published many articles on these and related subjects, including the booklet *Fashioning Person for a New Age* critiquing so-called “Catholic” sex education.

A convert to the Catholic Church from Greek Orthodoxy (1952), Mr. Likoudis translated Rene Casin’s *Saint Thomas Aquinas, Orthodoxy, and Neo-Modernism in the Church* (1977). He has authored 3 important books on the possible reunion of the Churches of the East and the West: *Ending the Byzantine Greek Schism* (Second Revised Edition, 1992; *The Divine Primacy of the Bishop of Rome and Modern Eastern Orthodoxy: Letters to a Greek Orthodox on the Unity of the Church* (Second Edition, 2002); and *Eastern Orthodoxy and the See of Peter* (2006). In addition to co-authoring *The Pope, the Council and the Mass*, he has edited and annotated an English translation of the work of St. Thomas Aquinas: *On Reasons for Our Faith against the Muslims, Greeks and Armenians* (2002). He received the 2002 Blessed Frederick Ozanam Award for Catholic Social Action from the Society of Catholic Social Scientists (SCSS) and is a contributor to *Catholic Social Thought, Social Science, and Social Policy: An Encyclopedia* (2006). He is also the author of dozens of articles in a variety of publications, and has long been a sought-after-speaker in defense of Catholic truth.

Mr. Likoudis is president-emeritus of Catholics United for the Faith (CUF), an international lay association headquartered in Steubenville, Ohio. Mr. Likoudis is married to the former Ruth Elaine Hickelton, and they are the parents of six children and 35 grandchildren.



Kenneth D. Whitehead is a former career diplomat who served in Rome and the Middle East and as the chief of the Arabic Service of the Voice of America. For eight years he served as executive vice president of Catholics United for the Faith. Later, after rejoining the government in the Reagan Administration, he rose to become a United States Assistant

Secretary of Education for Postsecondary Education. He now works as a writer, editor, and translator in Falls Church, Virginia. He is the author of dozens of articles on political, moral, social, and theological issues; and of eight books, including, most recently, *One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic: The Early Church Was the Catholic Church* (Ignatius Press, 2000) and *Political Orphan: The Pro-life Cause after 25 Years of Roe v. Wade* (New Hope Publications, 1998). His latest book, *What Vatican II Did Right: Forty Years after the Council and Counting*, is forthcoming from Ignatius Press.

He is also the co-author of *Flawed Expectations: The Reception of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Ignatius Press, 1996; co-authored with Msgr. Michael J. Wrenn); and he is the translator of twenty books from French, German, or Italian. He is also the editor of a number of volumes, including, most recently, *The Catholic Citizen* (2004) and *The Church, Marriage, and the Family* (2006), both published by Saint Augustine's Press, South Bend, Indiana.

Educated at the University of Utah and the University of Paris, Mr. Whitehead holds an honorary doctorate in Christian letters from the Franciscan University of Steubenville. He is a recipient of the Cardinal Wright Award from the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars and of the Blessed Frederick Ozanam Award from the Society of Catholic Social Studies.

He is married to the former Margaret O'Donohue, a professional parish Director of Religious Education (DRE), currently serving at Holy Spirit Church in Annandale, Virginia. They are the parents of four grown sons.