

SI SI NO NO

THE ANGELUS ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTICLE REPRINT

Let your speech be, “Yes, yes,” “No, no”; whatever is beyond these comes from the evil one. (Mt. 5:37)

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At a time when many rumors are abuzz over a possible liberalization of the traditional Mass, there is no lack of discussion about the opportuneness or need for such a move. Everyone remembers the words of Cardinal Franjo Seper when John Paul II was considering the possibility of such a liberalization during the audience he granted Archbishop Lefebvre on November 18, 1978. The then Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith opposed such a decree with the words: “They [the traditionalists] make a banner of the Mass.”

Cardinal Seper’s comment could be the theme of countless commentaries illustrating different aspects of the issue, but it seems to us more useful to focus on another kind of objection. A certain number of priests who habitually celebrate according to Pope Paul VI’s rite have a hard time envisioning the far-reaching effects a liberalization of the celebration of the traditional Mass could have. Long accustomed to the new liturgy, which they have celebrated since their priestly ordination, these priests do not grasp the

positive changes that could result for the Church from such a liberating measure.

To understand the ways in which this return of the traditional rite could change many things for the better in the Church and in the world, one must first briefly consider the difference between the two liturgies, the traditional and the new.

The Traditional Liturgy

We begin with the traditional liturgy, which has for 15 centuries enjoyed the right of possession¹ and the right of prescription.²

A sacrifice. When speaking about the Mass, the first aspect that Catholic doctrine sets forth is its sacrificial character. In the Old Testament, the prophet Malachias had announced the institution of a sacrifice that would be offered to God everywhere, and which would be a pure offering.³ Thus it is not surprising that the Council of Trent in its 22nd session defined the Mass as the unbloody renewal of the sacrifice of Calvary:

Free the Mass and The Face of the Earth Shall Be Renewed

...on the night that He was betrayed, so that He might leave to His beloved spouse the Church a visible sacrifice (as the nature of man demands), whereby that bloody sacrifice once to be completed on the Cross might be represented, and the memory of it remain even to the end of the world [I Cor. 11:23ff.] and its saving grace be applied to the remission of those sins which we daily commit, declaring Himself constituted “a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech,” [Ps. 109:4] offered to God the Father His own body and blood under the species of bread and wine and under the symbols of those same things gave to the apostles (whom He then constituted priests of the New Testament), so that they might partake, and He commanded them and their successors in the priesthood in these words to make offering: “Do this in commemoration of me, etc.” [Lk. 22:19], as the Catholic Church has always understood and taught.⁴

The Mass is thus the renewal of the sacrifice of Calvary under the species of bread and wine. The sacrament of the Eucharist is consequently a sacrifice, and a visible sacrifice (as human nature requires). During the Last Supper, Christ, though in an anticipated manner, made present the sacrifice that He would not accomplish in His body until the following day. The mode of the realization of the sacramental sacrifice was defined by Pope Pius XII when he spoke explicitly of the double consecration of bread and wine as an efficacious sign of Christ’s death:

For by the “transubstantiation” of bread into the body of Christ and of wine into His blood, His body and blood are both really present: now the Eucharistic species under which He is present symbolize the actual separation of His body and blood. Thus the commemorative representation of His death, which actually took place on Calvary, is repeated in every sacrifice of the altar, seeing that Jesus Christ is symbolically shown by separate symbols to be in a state of victimhood.⁵

A propitiatory sacrifice. Catholic doctrine assigns to all prayer and sacrifice a quadruple finality: latria, thanksgiving, propitiation, and impetration. These four attributes specify the nature of sacrifice. The propitiatory end (or reparation) is proper to our fallen world, the result of original sin. Before original sin, our first parents had to adore God, thank Him, and petition Him for His graces, but they were under no obligation to make reparation. Not having sinned, they did not need to make reparation in order to be reconciled with their God. This is no longer the case for sinful mankind, which, even for their prayers merely to be heard by God, must make reparation.

Failure to mention the propitiatory character of the Mass would be to live in the illusion of a sinless mankind. In Paradise, before original sin, a sacrifice offered uniquely for adoration, thanksgiving, and impetration would have been possible. After original sin, such a sacrifice henceforth would be illusory unless propitiation were joined to the other three ends

mentioned. The essentially propitiatory character of the Mass was mentioned in the Council of Trent’s declaration quoted above. It is also affirmed in the very words of the consecration of the wine: “...which shall be shed for you and for many unto the remission of sins.”

The New Liturgy

When attempting to define the new Mass, a number of interrelated terms crop up:

A meal. The new liturgy is presented first of all as a fraternal meal, a “synaxis,” according to the definition given in Article 7 of the *Institutio Generalis* of the Mass of Pope Paul VI. This first definition of the Mass comes from the meal of the Last Supper during which Christ instituted the sacrament of the Eucharist as well as from the fraternal meal that would often accompany the celebration of the holy mysteries in the primitive Church (cf. I Cor. 11:17-22, 33-34).

A narrative. A second approach of Pope Paul VI’s Mass emphasizes the account of the institution. During the celebration of the Mass, the institution of the Eucharist is narrated. Moreover, it is indeed thus that the GIRM defines the moment of the Consecration. It is then a question of explicitly referencing the narrative of the Last Supper to provide a context for Christian celebrations.

A memorial. Lastly, a third definition of Pope Paul VI’s Mass would consist in emphasizing the commemorative aspect of such a liturgy. Just as the Hebrews celebrated the Passover in memory of the crossing of the Red Sea and commemorated the deeds of God on behalf of the chosen people, so it would be in the New Testament, in which the Church commemorates during Mass the death of Christ on Calvary and the benefits He pours forth upon mankind. Besides, is this not what Christ Himself commanded the Apostles the night of Holy Thursday when he told them: “Do this in memory of me” (Lk. 22:19; I Cor. 11:24-25)?

Before considering the concrete consequences of these divergences on the definition of the Mass, allow us briefly to bring a Catholic light to bear upon these recent definitions of the Mass. **1)** Is the Mass essentially a meal? No, for the Council of Trent has defined: “Can. 1: If anyone says that...the act of offering is nothing else than Christ being given to us to eat: let him be anathema.”⁶ **2)** Is the Mass essentially a narration? No, for according to the teaching of the same Council,

For, after He had celebrated the ancient feast of the Passover, which the multitude of the children of Israel sacrificed [Exod. 12:1ff.] in memory of their exodus from Egypt, He instituted a new Passover, Himself to be immolated under visible signs by the Church through the priests, in memory of His own passage from this world to the Father, when by the shedding of His blood He redeemed us and “delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into His kingdom” [Col. 1:13].⁷

3) Is the Mass essentially a memorial? No, for Jesus Christ enjoined the Apostles to perform an action and

not simply to commemorate an event: “Do this...in memory of me,” which the Council of Trent defines in these terms:

If anyone says that the sacrifice of the Mass...is a mere commemoration of the sacrifice consummated on the Cross, but not one of propitiation...: let him be anathema.⁸

In conclusion, if Catholic theology can easily incorporate what is true in the partial definitions of the Mass that have emerged during the last 40 years, it is because it gives the adequate definition of the Mass as a propitiatory sacrifice. The Mass being thus defined by its essence, it is then possible to show that it is also, but secondarily, a meal, a narration, and a memorial.⁹

Having briefly recalled the differences between the traditional Mass and the new Mass, let us try to see what a return to the traditional Mass would signify for the life of the Church. We shall consider successively the sacerdotal life, religious life, family life, and the apostolate.

Sacerdotal Life

Archbishop Lefebvre used to say “No Mass, no priest; no priest, no Mass.” This was the adage he repeated incessantly in his conferences. There is nothing new in this, since St. Paul wrote to the Hebrews that “every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins” (Heb. 5:1).

A vast difference, thus, exists between the minister of Jesus Christ, priest and victim, who sacramentally renews the sacrifice of Calvary (as the traditional liturgy presents it to us) and the president of the assembly, charged with telling us of the deeds and gestures of the Master (as the new liturgy presents it to us). At the head of his flock, but turned towards God like all the faithful for he also needs to make reparation for his sins, the priest of the traditional liturgy centers everything on Christ, who by His divine nature transcends the created order. President of the assembly, which he considers in an all too human encounter, the priest of the new liturgy tries to make the divine emerge from the animation of the assembly. Disappearing completely behind an immutable rite, the priest of the traditional liturgy tries to efface himself as an individual in order to lead souls to God. Obligated to innovate continually in order to hold the attention of the faithful on what is happening, the priest of the new liturgy runs the risk of putting himself forward instead of and in the place of Jesus Christ.

Whether the priesthood is considered in terms of the divine call it presupposes, the preparation it requires, the ministry to which it leads, or its perseverance in the midst of an evil world, the traditional Mass will always remind the priest of this truth: he is priest and victim, following our Lord. Complaints are made that vocations are becoming rare. Why not return to the priestly ideal left us by our Lord? This ideal is to be found in the words of St. Paul: “For I judged not myself to know any thing among you, but Jesus Christ, and Him

crucified” (I Cor. 2:2), an ideal faithfully reproduced in the traditional Mass. Questions are raised about priestly formation in the seminaries. If the ideal of the priesthood lies in a special conformity of the priest with the cross of Christ, would it not be necessary to place at the center of the seminary and seminarian training the mystery of the faith which is the unbloody renewal of the sacrifice of Calvary? The causes for the departure from the priesthood of more than 60,000 priests during the decades of the 1960’s and 70’s are sought. Instead of limiting the investigation to sociological analyses and blaming the modern world, would it not be better to restore to priests their essential finality: the Mass that is a sacrifice?

There is no doubt that the scandals that have stained the priesthood during the last few decades, especially in the US, are regrettable and require reparation. But is it not cruel to require heroism of priests immersed in a hypersexualized world without giving them an effective armament for their perseverance? What dose of renunciation is contained in a Mass-meal? What measure of mortification is to be found in a narrative of the Institution? What resolutions flow from a memorial of the Passion?

Only grace will save us: the grace of Jesus Christ, the grace of Calvary, the grace of the holy Mass.

Religious Life

What we have said of the priestly life is also true of the religious life. The sanctification of the individual by the practice of the evangelical counsels—by means of the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience—is only possible and realizable through the sacrifice of the Cross. “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Mt. 16:24). “Let him deny himself,” let him “take up his cross”—where, when, how? The monks and nuns find the answer in daily assistance at the holy Mass. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,” advises St. Paul. Where is the most perfect expression of the Lord’s sentiments to be found if not in the holy sacrifice of the Mass and in the venerable prayers the Church has fashioned over the centuries to serve as a jewel-box for the gem which is the Real Presence?

The Canon of the traditional Mass has nothing sentimental or strained about it. In keeping with the vision of faith, it draws us into sentiments of propitiation, renunciation, and of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. An attentive rereading of the Roman Canon brings out its sober objectivity: the objectivity of sin, the objectivity of our condition as sinners, the objectivity of reparation, the objectivity of sacrifice. What monks and nuns need is not a sentimental, subjective piety, even if it is liturgical; but rather, strong, clear principles that illuminate the way of renunciation to which they have been called

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by Christ. Here again, a rite centered on man, on the participation of the community, on the fraternal meal, will be of no use to those who must elevate the world by their daily life of renunciation and sacrifice.

Family Life

If consecrated souls are not able live up to their sublime vocation of perfection without the sacrifice of the Mass, what can be said of Christian people in constant contact with the world and its spirit? For, if monks and nuns are, as it were, the professionals of holiness by their special vocation received from God, the faithful, and in particular those called to the married state, must not lag behind in this regard. When our Lord speaks about sanctification, He speaks of only one way, the narrow way, and of one gate, a narrow gate (Mt. 7:14). There are not, then, two ways to get to heaven: on the one hand, one that would be incumbent on consecrated souls in the priesthood or the religious life; and on the other, another that would be for Christian couples. No, there is only one Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, and only one way to get to heaven, the cross.

What well-educated layman, priest, or bishop could fail to lament over the weakening of the ideals of married and family life nowadays. We need only mention widespread concubinage, the increase in the number of remarried divorcés, and the multiplication of causes for annulments, *etc.* Certainly, these scandals are not exclusive to our time, and the Church has always had much ado to remedy the situation. But has it really been a good idea to impose on the Church over the last four decades a Mass that is no longer defined as a sacrifice? Isn't the model St. Paul holds up that of Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:23)? But where was this union sealed, if not on the cross?

If we want to give married couples a chance at persevering in fidelity to their promises, then we must give back to them the Mass that is a sacrifice. It is only in the Mass that the spouses will begin to understand the fidelity of Christ to His Spouse, the Church, and of the Church to her Spouse, Christ. Only the Mass that is a sacrifice will enable the spouses to pay the price demanded for the unity, indissolubility, and fecundity of their union. If the Mass comes back in its sacrificial form and the modern form fades away, then the spouses will know what they must do as regards having children and their Christian upbringing, and the life of family piety in the home. Even in the cases of irremediable human tragedy in which one of the spouses is infected by a fatal communicable disease, the two spouses will know the will of God for them. They will also find the strength in the sacrifice of Christ, renewed on our altars, to live in perfect chastity.

The priestly ministry of the 21st century often unfolds against a backdrop of dechristianization, secularization, paganism, or indifference—so many worries for the Catholic priest who is attentive to the desires of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to reign over souls. What must this priest do? Where should he begin? Let us defer to a missionary bishop who, on the day of the golden jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood, described the power of the Mass over the souls who had been confided to him during the 50 years of his ministry:

Certainly I knew, by the studies which we had done, what this great mystery of our faith was, but I had not yet understood its entire value, efficacy and depth. Thus I lived day by day, year by year, in Africa and particularly at Gabon, where I spent 13 years of my missionary life, first at the seminary and then in the bush among the Africans, with the natives. There I saw—yes, I saw—what the grace of the Holy Mass could do. I saw it in the holy souls of some of our catechists. I saw it in those pagan souls transformed by assistance at Holy Mass, and by the Holy Eucharist. These souls understood the mystery of the Sacrifice of the Cross and united themselves to Our Lord Jesus Christ in the sufferings of His Cross, offering their sacrifices and their sufferings with Our Lord Jesus Christ and living as Christians.

...These [were] men produced by the grace of the Mass. They assisted at the Mass daily, communicating with great fervor and they have become models and the light to those about them. This is just to list a few without counting the many Christians transformed by this grace.

I was able to see these pagan villages become Christian—being transformed not only, I would say, spiritually and supernaturally, but also being transformed physically, socially, economically and politically; because these people, pagans which they were, became cognizant of the necessity of fulfilling their duties, in spite of the trials, in spite of the sacrifices; of maintaining their commitments, and particularly their commitment in marriage. Then the village began to be transformed, little by little, under the influence of grace, under the influence of the grace of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and soon all the villages were wanting to have one of the fathers visit them. Oh, the visit of a missionary! They waited impatiently to assist at the Holy Mass, in order to be able to confess their sins and then to receive Holy Communion.

Some of these souls also consecrated themselves to God: nuns, priests, brothers giving themselves to God, consecrating themselves to God. There you have the fruit of the Holy Mass.

How did the Mass direct all these souls towards holiness? The Pontiff explicitly says: "It is necessary that we study somewhat the profound motive of this transformation: sacrifice."¹⁰

Are we naive enough to believe that the return of the traditional Mass will restore everything to order in the twinkling of an eye? Certainly not. But what we do believe, is that the body of the Church will not have its wounds healed until the blood of Christ begins to

flow freely again through its veins, bringing grace, strength, perseverance, energy, and supernatural life in all its members. Was this not already St. Paul's conviction when he wrote to the Hebrews: "Without shedding of [Christ's] blood there is no remission [of sins]" (Heb. 9:22).

Arbogastus

Translated from *Courrier de Rome*, December 2006, pp.5-8.

¹ According to the canonical principle "*Melior est conditio possidentis.*"

² According to the argumentation developed by Tertullian in his *De Præscriptione Hæreticorum*.

³ "For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation" (Mal. 1:11).

⁴ Council of Trent, Session XXII, Decree on the Sacrifice of the Mass, Ch. 1 (Dz.939).

⁵ Pius XII, Encyclical *Mediator Dei*, November 20, 1947, §70.

⁶ Dz. 948.

⁷ Dz. 938.

⁸ Dz. 950.

⁹ Likewise, by defining man as a rational animal (essential definition) one can also show that man is characteristically able to laugh and walk on two feet, and is a social animal (secondary characteristics he has in common with other creatures but which do not adequately and essentially define him).

¹⁰ Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, Sermon on the Occasion of His Sacerdotal Jubilee [English version: Michael Davies, *Apologia Pro Marcel Lefebvre* (Kansas City: Angelus Press, 1983), II, 334-35].

Must We Attend A "Protestantized" Mass?

Reverend Editor:

I have been reading your review...for years. In it, the *Novus Ordo Missae* is often criticized...but, to my mind, not clearly: your criticisms are too vague, or so it seems. A few years ago...advice was given in your columns to substitute a half hour (or hour) of meditation, Bible reading, or other pious exercises for attendance at a Sunday Mass celebrated according to the *N.O.M.*, because it is an abnormal Mass. I wrote asking you to prove it, to come out and openly say that all the New Masses are invalid, and then your position would be consistent...nothing can match a valid Mass (which, moreover, is obligatory). I also said that a protestantized or protestantizing Mass (at the most, if you will, in style, manner, omissions, intentions) is one thing; a protestant Mass is another. There is an abyss between them...

In last year's September issue of the *Courrier de Rome* I found an article called "The Good Shepherd, the Wolves, and the Mercenaries," [*The Angelus*, Jan. 2007, pp.19-26-Ed.] (containing) an accusation of heresy against the New Mass. I reread this article seven or eight times and more, hoping to find between the lines a proof of doctrinal error (in the words or in the acts), for such is heresy. If it exists, it should be specified as clearly as possible, for it involves a very important matter...The editor, on the contrary, in his commentary, speaks of something else (and he speaks well), but fails to demonstrate objectively the error of heresy. Everything is captured in the anecdote recounted by Archbishop Marini. The thesis is: "the new rite is a heresy"; the proof is: "in the old rite, the celebrant genuflected, he adored the host, he rose, he showed it to the people, then he genuflected again to adore it." My commentary: Is the whole rite a heresy because of an omitted genuflection? I ask: where is the heresy, the doctrinal error in the words or acts?

...My expectation of a clear statement from the *Sì Sì No No* on the [heretical status] of the *N.O.M.* ...changed into disappointment. I add that I appreciated the rest of the article...I have written to you impelled by a lively sentiment of Christian and priestly charity.

Very truly yours in the Blessed Trinity.

—A Priest

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Dear Fellow Priest,

First of all, we must remark that in the article in question, the word *heresy* in regard to the New Mass did not fall from our pen, but rather from Archbishop Marini's mouth; or rather, Archbishop Marini placed it in the mouth of his Lefebvrist interlocutor with the delirious discourse that you quite rightly singled out but which, again wrongly, you attribute to us.

What comes from our pen, on the contrary, is a commentary in which we disavow the "Lefebvrist" thesis, and we put in doubt whether it was ever actually expressed, at least in the terms employed by Marini:

he [Marini] evidently desires to portray all these "Lefebvrists"—as he calls them—as a mass of imbeciles who must be affected by mental problems since they reduce the liturgical reform to a simple question of genuflection....

And we must say that with you, he reached his objective, at least judging by your letter.

In reality, if the "Lefebvrist" did say something on the subject, he did not say it in the "delirious" manner used by Archbishop Marini. The "Lefebvrists," who until the last Council rested peacefully in the lap of their holy Mother, the Church, put in the position of having to safeguard their faith, have been compelled to acquire solid erudition on the differences between the Catholic doctrine on the holy Mass and the Lutheran doctrine.

One of the principal points is the following: whereas the Catholic Church teaches that, in the Mass, our Lord Jesus Christ is made truly present on the altar by the words pronounced by the priest at the moment of the Consecration, for the Lutherans, on the contrary, it is not the words of the Consecration but the faith of the faithful present that produces a certain spiritual presence of Christ during the Supper. Hence the change introduced by the ecumenists in the new "Catholic" rite.

In the traditional Roman rite (improperly called the Mass of St. Pius V), the priest, after the first consecration, conscious of holding in his hands no longer bread, but the real Body of Christ, immediately genuflects and adores his God; then, rising, he elevates the consecrated host and presents it for the adoration of the faithful; finally, after having set it on the corporal, which recalls the shroud and the reality of the divine Body, he adores it again (and he repeats this, *mutatis mutandis*, for the chalice of Christ's Blood).

In the Mass according to the new rite, everything has changed: as if nothing were produced by virtue of the words of consecration, the priest, without any sign of adoration, immediately elevates the host and shows it to the faithful present; then he places it, not on the corporal, but on the paten, and only then does he genuflect (he does the same, *mutatis mutandis*, for the chalice of Christ's Blood).

What have the Protestants deduced from such a change? That the Catholic Church has agreed with Luther against the Council of Trent: it is by the faith of

the assembly, and not by the words of consecration, that Christ is made spiritually present during the Supper; that is why the priest, in the new rite, first presents the host to the faithful, and only then does he genuflect and adore. Such is the deduction of the Protestants, who, because of this change and others, have no difficulty in employing the rite of Pope Paul VI in their "Supper," whereas before they held in abomination the "papist Mass," that is to say, the traditional Roman rite. The deceived Catholics of good faith, on the contrary, have not understood the gravity of this "ecumenical" change (nor of the others), or else they have overcome their astonishment by telling themselves that ultimately, transubstantiation depends on the words of consecration and not on the signs of adoration, whether their number is increased or decreased. But that does not change the fact that in the new rite there is an objective slide towards the Lutheran doctrine, and an equally objective retreat from the Catholic doctrine of the holy Mass, as Cardinals Ottaviani and Bacci observed to Pope Paul VI, and that that runs the risk of "protestantizing" new generations of Catholics.

Dear confrere, now compare what we just explained to the words Marini put in the mouth of the "Lefebvrist," and you cannot but discern the purpose of his tale—told as journalistic anecdote—to mock and denigrate. It will appear to you as clearly that the ones who were making things up or overturning them were Marini, voluntarily, or even the "Lefebvrist," who perhaps expressed himself awkwardly (but Marini should have been able to understand), or—why not?—the journalist who let himself be carried away by journalistic license; but in no case can it be us.

Discussion of the new rite of Mass must not turn round its validity or invalidity. The Masses of Orthodox schismatics are also valid, but even so a Catholic is not allowed to attend them. The Masses celebrated during the French Revolution by the "juring" priests were also valid, but Catholics were right to avoid them, contenting themselves to hearing the Mass of a "refractory" priest from time to time.¹

In reality, as the Catechism of St. Pius X teaches (No. 217), anyone who "without a real impediment" fails to hear Mass on days of obligation commits a mortal sin; otherwise, "[a]ny moderately grave reason suffices to excuse one from assistance at Holy Mass, such as considerable hardship or corporal or *spiritual harm* either to oneself or another" (Fr. Heribert Jone, *Moral Theology*, No. 198). Hence the real problem is not to know whether the Mass celebrated according to the new rite is valid or invalid, but rather to know whether it causes or even can cause *spiritual harm* to the person hearing it.

It seems to us that the answer to this question is already to be found in your letter, where you speak of the "protestantized or protestantizing" Mass. And even if you would not be convinced of it, this danger was promptly denounced to Pope Paul VI by Cardinals Ottaviani and Bacci, with competence in the matter and due knowledge of the thing:

...the *Novus Ordo Missae*—considering the new elements susceptible to widely different interpretations which are implied or taken for granted—represents, both as a whole and in its details, a striking departure from the Catholic theology of the Mass as it was formulated in Session 22 of the Council of Trent. The “canons” of the rite definitively fixed at that time erected an insurmountable barrier against any heresy which might attack the integrity of the Mystery.²

Now, a “protestantized” (in itself) and a “protestantizing” (for the mentality of those attending) Mass *cancels the obligation to hear Mass on Sundays and holy days*.

The Church imposes the obligation to hear Mass “in the Catholic rite,”³ but a protestantized rite cannot at the same time be characterized as Catholic. Moreover, a “protestantizing” rite exposes the faithful to “considerable spiritual harm,” which is one of the strongest reasons exempting from the Sunday obligation of assistance at Mass. And as it involves danger for our own faith and for that of our dependents, for whom we are responsible before God, we must say that *whoever is conscious of this danger, insofar as he is conscious of it*, far from satisfying the Church’s precept, rather commits a sin against faith [by attending the *N.O.M.*].

You well know that the believer has above all the obligation to cultivate and protect his faith, for it is the root and the foundation of his eternal salvation, and that is why the natural divine law forbids him to endanger it.⁴ You also know that it is precisely for this reason that the Church has always forbidden Catholics to participate in non-Catholic Masses, even if they are valid. That is why if a Catholic finds himself in an Orthodox schismatic country and he is unable to find a place of Catholic worship, not only is he dispensed from the obligation to hear Mass, but if he participates in the Mass of the schismatics (valid, once again) he is not excused from committing a sin against the faith. And this is so in virtue of divine *natural* law, that is to say, even if the ecclesiastical laws have changed for “ecumenical” reasons.

...We do not consider the new rite to be heretical, but rather gravely equivocal, and favoring heresy. This rite was in fact elaborated with the discreet (but not too discreet) cooperation of certain “Protestant experts” so that it would be acceptable to both the Catholics and the Protestants.

In 1965, Msgr. Bugnini, who directed the work of the “liturgical reform,” then enjoying the full confidence of Pope Paul VI, announced the “desire” to “strip [from the new rite] *everything which can be the shadow of a stumbling block or [even] of some displeasure for our separated brethren; that is, for the Protestants*” (*Osservatore Romano*, March 11, 1965). And what were these stumbling blocks and these causes of displeasure for the “separated brethren” if not the rites and gestures that expressed too clearly the Catholic truths refuted by the Protestants and reaffirmed by the Council of Trent (the Real Presence, ministerial priesthood, the sacrificial and propitiatory character of the Holy Mass,

etc.)? This was the origin of an equivocal rite susceptible of a double interpretation; a rite that, by obscuring the Catholic truths, allows the Catholic to interpret it in a Catholic manner, and the Protestant to interpret it in a Lutheran manner.

We gave the example above of the priest’s genuflection immediately after the consecration. We could give others. What is of interest to us here is to underscore that everyone is in agreement about the protestantization of the Mass, both modernists and non-modernists. We have already quoted Bugnini (1965). In 1967, the *Osservatore Romano* of October 13 affirmed:

The liturgical reform has made a giant step forward and we have drawn quite close to the liturgical forms of the Lutheran Church.

In 1969, in their letter introducing the *Short Critical Study of the New Order of Mass*, Cardinals Ottaviani and Bacci denounced to Pope Paul VI the price of the ecumenical operation on the Mass: the “striking departure from the Catholic theology of the Mass,” and the lowering of the “insurmountable barrier” that had been erected by the Council of Trent “against any heresy which might attack the integrity of the Mystery” (as it so happens, against the Lutheran heresy).

In 1978 (on February 26), Archbishop Lefebvre wrote to the Holy Office that the rite is “a catholicoprotestant synthesis” and protested:

We want to keep the Catholic Faith with the help of the Catholic Mass, and not by means of an ecumenical Mass, albeit valid, not heretical, but *favens haeresim* [favoring heresy].⁵

The convert Julien Green defined the new rite as “a very clumsy imitation of the Anglican office, which was familiar to us in our childhood,” and he spoke of the Mass as “recut, reduced to protestant dimensions.”⁶

Msgr. Klaus Gamber, who is not a “traditionalist” but merely a liturgical expert (Director of Liturgical Sciences at Ratisbonne and honorary member of the Pontifical Liturgical Academy of Rome), in 1979 denounced the “destruction” of the old Roman rite, which had been preserved substantially intact over the centuries and recommended to the universal Church by all the Roman Pontiffs, for “it goes back to the Apostle Peter.”⁷

Finally, leaving aside many other judgments, we reach the testimony of Jean Guittou (the author of *Paul VI Secret*). On December 19, 1993, during a debate on *Lumière 101 (Radio Courtoisie)*, he affirmed that

Paul VI’s intention concerning the liturgy, concerning putting the liturgy into modern languages, was to reform the Catholic liturgy so that it would closely coincide with the Protestant liturgy...with the Protestant Supper.

Later on he said:

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...I repeat that Paul VI did everything in his power to bring the Mass—beyond the Council of Trent—into agreement with the Protestant Supper.

At a priest's protestation, Guitton replied:

The Mass of Paul VI is presented first of all as a meal, isn't it? And a lot of emphasis is given to the aspect of participation in a meal, and much less to the notion of sacrifice, of ritual sacrifice....In other words, there was in Paul VI the ecumenical intention to efface—or at least to correct—what was too “catholic,” in the traditional sense, in the Mass, and to bring the Catholic Mass—I repeat—into agreement with the Calvinist Mass.⁸

For Jean Guitton also, the new rite of Mass is “protestantized.” The only difference is that for the neo-modernists, this protestantization is a victory because, as the *Osservatore Romano* of October 13, 1967, put it, it is “a giant step forward” in the ecumenical domain, while for faithful Catholics (the “traditionalists”), it is a liturgical revolution that poses very grave problems of conscience not only because the rite is protestantized, but even more because it is “protestantizing.” With a Mass that has been “recut, reduced to protestant dimensions,” wrote Julian Green,

the reality of the propitiatory sacrifice is on the brink of being discreetly eclipsed in the minds of Catholics, whether priests or laymen....The old priests who have it, so to speak, in their blood, are not going to forget it, and consequently they celebrate Masses in conformity with the Church's intentions. But what can be said of young priests? What do they believe in?⁹

My dear confrere, reflect and consider honestly whether the “duty of reparation” is incumbent on us or on those who continue to impose and to defend

an “ecumenical” rite apt in time to demolish Catholic faith in the holy Mass.

Hirpinus

Translated from *Courrier de Rome*, October 2006, pp.1-4.

- ¹ The “juring” priests had sworn to be governed by the revolutionary Civil Constitution of the Clergy of July 1790, whereas the “refractory” priests had refused.—*Ed.*
- ² Letter of presentation of the *Ottaviani Intervention: A Short Critical Study of the New Order of Mass* [English version: Translated by Fr. Anthony Cekada (Rockford, IL: TAN Books & Publishers, 1992)].
- ³ Roberti, *Dictionary of Moral Theology* [Italian], s.v. “Sanctification of feasts.”
- ⁴ Cf. *Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Faith.”
- ⁵ “Mgr. Lefebvre et le Saint Office,” *Itinéraires*, No.233, May 1979.
- ⁶ *Ce qu'il faut d'amour à l'homme* (Paris: Plon, 1978).
- ⁷ *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy* [German].
- ⁸ *Una Voce*, May-June 1994.
- ⁹ *Op. cit.*, p.143.

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