

THE OTTAVIANI

ROMA - BASILICA DI S. PIETRO IN VATICANO



INTERVENTION

Short Critical Study of the New Order of Mass



Alfredo Cardinal Ottaviani • Antonio Cardinal Bacci

A Group of Roman Theologians

Translated and Introduced by Rev. Anthony Cekada

Revised and Updated



Philothea Press

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“The innovations in the Novus Ordo and the fact that all that is of perennial value finds only a minor place — if it subsists at all — could well turn into a certainty the suspicion, already prevalent, alas, in many circles, that truths which have always been believed by the Christian people can be changed or ignored without infidelity to that sacred deposit of doctrine to which the Catholic faith is bound forever.”

— Alfredo Cardinal Ottaviani
25 September 1969

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Abbreviations



- DB Denziger-Bannwart. *Enchiridion Symbolorum*. 31st edition. Barcelona, Freiburg and Rome: Herder, 1957.
- DOL *Documents on the Liturgy, 1963–1979: Conciliar, Papal, and Curial Texts*, translated, compiled and arranged by International Committee on English in the Liturgy. Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 1982.
- GI General Instruction on the Roman Missal. *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani*. 1st edition, 6 April 1969. In Paul VI, *Missale Romanum ... Pauli VI Promulgatum: Ordo Missae*, 13–76. 2nd edition. March 1970. Translated in DOL 1391–731, with variants between 1975 *editio typica altera* and 1st edition provided in footnotes.
- PTL *Papal Teachings: The Liturgy*, selected and arranged by the Benedictine Monks of Solesmes, translated by the Daughters of St. Paul. Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1962.
- SC Vatican Council II. Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 4 December 1963. Translated in DOL 1–131.

Foreword



to the 2010 Edition

In the mid-1990s, the post-Vatican II rite of Mass (known as the New Mass, the *Novus Ordo* or the Mass of Paul VI) increasingly became the object of criticism in certain quarters of the mainstream Catholic press. At the same time, a younger generation of clergy began to take an interest in reviving pre-Vatican II liturgical practices. Both phenomena set the stage for Benedict XVI's July 2007 *Motu Proprio Summorum Pontificum*, which granted general permission to celebrate Mass using the 1962 Missal, the last edition published before the post-Vatican II liturgical changes were introduced.

Many of the criticisms of the New Mass that are now heard in the second decade of the twenty-first century were first levelled against the rite in 1969 by the document which follows: *Short Critical Study of the New Order of Mass*, known in English as *The Ottaviani Intervention*. The *Intervention* became a sort of charter for the traditionalist movement — those Catholics who (among other things) rejected the reformed rites.

Because of the historical importance of the *Intervention* and because the existing English translations suffered from a number of serious shortcomings, I decided to re-translate the text from the Italian, French and Latin. In 1992 TAN Books published the translation, together with a short introduction I had written to explain the origins and effects of the *Intervention*.

Since calls to re-evaluate the new rite have now become far more widespread than they were in 1992, I decided to

publish a new edition of the *Intervention* in hopes that it will draw the attention of more and more Catholics to the underlying problems of the post-Vatican II liturgical reforms.

— Rev. Anthony Cekada

St. George

23 April 2010

Preface



*The Background to
The Ottaviani Intervention*

“It is rather strong to claim that the New Mass is contrary to the Council of Trent but, displeasing as it is, it is true.”

Thus spoke Alfredo Cardinal Ottaviani. Under three popes, he served as head of the Holy Office, the Vatican tribunal responsible for uprooting heresy and protecting the purity of the Catholic faith. Before him in September 1969 lay the document you are about to read — a study which contends that the New Order of Mass promulgated in April 1969 poses a serious threat to the integrity of the Catholic faith.

Such a charge will strike most Catholics as exceedingly odd. While the Mass they assist at each Sunday may seem a bit boring now and again (or even more like entertainment than prayer on occasion), what would prompt a distinguished cardinal to call it contrary to one of the General Councils of the Catholic Church? A partial answer to the question, at least, is to be found in the story of *The Ottaviani Intervention*.

For centuries the rite of the Mass was fixed, stable, otherworldly, uniform throughout the world and unsurpassed in beauty. The core of the Mass, the Roman Canon, had remained essentially unchanged at least since the days of St. Ambrose (4th century). Other prayers in the Mass were similarly ancient. In response to Protestant attacks on the Mass, the Council of Trent (1545–63) reiterated and defined the Church’s teaching on Christ’s Real Presence in the Eucharist and on the sacrificial character of the Mass. Shortly

thereafter in 1570, Pope St. Pius V promulgated a Missal which codified the Church's already-existing liturgical tradition.

The Mass of St. Pius V (often called the "Tridentine Mass") continued to be used until the Second Vatican Council (1962–5) opened the door to a whole series of sweeping changes in the Mass. In 1963 Pope Paul VI established an entity known as Consilium (The Committee for Implementing the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy) which he entrusted with the duty of carrying out the liturgical reform mandated by Vatican II. Consilium formulated a new Order of Mass — the framework of prayers and ritual gestures employed each time Mass is celebrated — which Paul VI duly promulgated on 3 April 1969.

Conservatives — they would later be referred to as "traditionalists" — viewed the New Order of Mass (*Novus Ordo Missae*) with alarm. They had endured five years of continuous liturgical change, each stage of which appeared to bring the Mass closer to Protestantism and closer to the teaching of the progressive theologians who sought to subvert the Church from within. In the New Order of Mass, Protestantism and the new theology seemed to have triumphed. But what to do?

Origins of the Intervention

In the conservative camp were two members of the Roman aristocracy, Vittoria Cristina Guerrini and Aemilia Pediconi. Both were friends of Cardinal Ottaviani (then

retired from his post as Prefect of the Holy Office), and both had wide connections at the Vatican and in other ecclesiastical circles. The ladies used their contacts to bring together a small group of conservative theologians, liturgists and pastors who would prepare a study of the contents of the New Order of Mass. Cardinal Ottaviani agreed — it is unclear at exactly what point — to revise the study and to present it to Paul VI.¹

The group met a number of times in April and May 1969. The task of preparing a suitable text fell to a Dominican theologian and philosopher, Father M.L. Guérard des Lauriers, then a professor at the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome. Working from his notes in French, Father Guérard dictated a text to Madame Guerrini, who simultaneously translated it into Italian.²

The result was the *Short Critical Study of the New Order of Mass* (*Breve Esame Critico del Novus Ordo Missae*), now known in English-speaking countries as *The Ottaviani Intervention*. At the request of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, then recently retired from his position as Superior General of the Holy Ghost Fathers, Father Guérard translated the text into French.³

1. "Avertissement," in Cardinaux Ottaviani et Bacci, *Bref Examen Critique du Nouvel "Ordo Missae"*, new edition with Italian text, edited and translated into French by M.L. Guérard des Lauriers OP, (Vailly-sur-Sauldre, France: Editions Sainte Jeanne d'Arc 1983), 5.

2. "Avertissement," 5–6.

3. "Avertissement," 7. Guérard lost his position at the Lateran as a result of his involvement in the project. He later taught at Lefebvre's seminary in Ecône, Switzerland. (He was one of my professors.)

Cardinal Ottaviani, for his part, composed a covering letter to Paul VI which supported the *Study's* conclusions. The organizers hoped to have a large number of high-ranking ecclesiastics sign it along with the cardinal — Archbishop Lefebvre spoke of six hundred bishops.⁴ Had such been the case, it is conceivable that the *Study* would have moved Paul VI to modify substantially or even rescind the New Order of Mass.

From May through September 1969 the organizers lined up at least a dozen cardinals to sign, among them, Arcadio Cardinal Larraona, former head of the Sacred Congregation of Rites. Cardinal Ottaviani spent several days examining the *Critical Study* and signed the covering letter on 13 September 1969.

The following day, however, a French traditionalist priest compromised the project by publishing the *Critical Study*, even though it was not supposed to have been made public until a month after the group of cardinals presented it to Paul VI. His action appears to have scared off most of the signers.⁵

Antonio Cardinal Bacci, however, remained undeterred. The cardinal was a famous Latinist, and during this time served on the Vatican Congregations for Religious, Causes of Saints and Catholic Education. In 1967 Cardinal Bacci had written a laudatory preface to a book which charged

4. "Avertissement," 7.

5. Based on an account by one of the organizers, Dr. Elizabeth Gerstner, a résumé of which is provided in Michael Davies, *Pope Paul's New Mass* (Dickinson TX: Angelus Press 1980), 483–4.

that the liturgical reform had betrayed the faith of the Council of Trent, and that the head of Consilium, Cardinal Lercaro, was “Luther resurrected.”⁶

Such a prelate did not scare easily. Cardinal Bacci signed the letter on 28 September, and the following day both the letter and the *Critical Study* were presented to Paul VI.

Content of the Intervention

The central contention of *The Ottaviani Intervention* is that the New Order of Mass teems with dangerous errors in doctrine and represents an attack against the Catholic teaching on the Mass defined by the Council of Trent. The authors of the *Intervention* stated that their intention was not to present an exhaustive treatment of all the problems the New Mass posed, but rather to point out those deviations from Catholic doctrine and practice which are most typical of the New Mass. Among these the *Intervention* lists the following:

- A new definition of the Mass as an “assembly” rather than as a sacrifice offered to God.
- Omissions of elements emphasizing the Catholic teaching (utterly repudiated by Protestants) that the Mass makes satisfaction for sins.
- The reduction of the priest’s role to a position approximating that of a Protestant minister.

6. The work was Tito Casini, *La Tunica Stracciata (The Torn Tunic)*, (Rome: 1967).

- Implicit denials of Christ's Real Presence and the doctrine of transubstantiation.
- The change of the Consecration from a sacramental action into a mere narrative re-telling of the story of the Last Supper.
- The fragmenting of the Church's unity of belief through the introduction of countless options.
- Ambiguous language and equivocation throughout the rite which compromise the Church's doctrines.

The *Intervention* levelled these charges against two texts: (1) the New Order of Mass itself, and (2) the 1969 *General Instruction on the Roman Missal*, a 341-paragraph document which set forth not only the rubrical directions for performing the new rite, but also the theological principles on which it was based.

The General Instruction would be a particular bone of contention during the controversy which would follow.

Vatican Reaction

Once the conservative Catholic press spread the story of the *Intervention* throughout the world, a major scramble ensued at the Vatican.

Though Paul VI had received a copy of the General Instruction in 1968⁷ and had personally approved every detail of the New Order of Mass, he sent the *Intervention*

7. Annibale Bugnini CM, *La Riforma Liturgica (1948-1975)* (Rome: Edizioni Liturgiche 1983), 184.

to the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on 22 October 1969, with word that they should determine whether or not the criticisms were justified.⁸

On 12 November 1969 the Congregation replied with a letter to the Vatican Secretary of State. In his memoirs the Secretary of Consilium, Mgr. Annibale Bugnini, assured readers that the General Instruction (which the *Intervention* had subjected to particularly severe criticism) was found to conform to the Church's teaching, but he quotes only one sentence from the Congregation's letter,⁹ rather than reproducing the entire text.

Mgr. Bugnini's reticence here is somewhat out of character. Elsewhere in his memoirs (a work nearly a thousand pages long), he quoted at great length documents which defended the orthodoxy of the new rite. Had the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith stated that *all* the *Intervention's* criticisms were utterly unfounded, one can be sure that Mgr. Bugnini would have reproduced the full text of the reply.

The members of Consilium met in Rome in early November. "Some difficulty," they noted, "emerged over certain points of *The General Instruction on the Roman Missal*, in particular over Article 7 [the new definition of the Mass]"¹⁰ — an understatement, to be sure, as some in the press were starting to refer to the *Novus Ordo* as the "heretical Mass."

8. Bugnini, *La Riforma*, 285.

9. "The work *Short Critical Study*... contains many statements which are superficial, exaggerated, inexact, impassioned and false." Quoted Bugnini, *La Riforma*, 285.

10. Bugnini, *La Riforma*, 193.

On 18 November 1969 Consilium issued a stiffly-worded Declaration “clarifying” the General Instruction.¹¹ Consilium attempted to handle the *Intervention’s* doctrinal objections to the *Novus Ordo* by claiming the General Instruction was not intended to be a *doctrinal* statement but merely a *pastoral* or *rubrical* instruction — a contention others who defended the New Mass would later repeat in good faith. Tactically, this was a clever move — a document not intended as a doctrinal statement could hardly misstate doctrine.

Well before the dispute provoked by *The Ottaviani Intervention*, however, members of the 13-man Consilium subcommittee directly responsible for creating the New Order of Mass were telling a different story. Father Bugnini and the Rev. Peter Coughlan had already stated that the Instruction would treat of “theological principles,”¹² constitute a “full theological... exposition”¹³ of the new rite, describe the New Mass “from a doctrinal point of view,”¹⁴ or serve as an “introduction of a doctrinal character.”¹⁵

The 1969 General Instruction, therefore, was clearly

11. SC Divine Worship, Presentation *Edita Instructione*, May 1970, DOL 1371.

12. [Annibale Bugnini CM], “Decima Session Plenaria ‘Consilii’” *Notitiae* 4 (1968), 181.

13. Annibale Bugnini CM, in a report to the Medellin Conference of the Latin American Episcopate, 30 August 1968, *Revista Ecclesiastica Brasileira* 28 (1968), 628.

14. [Annibale Bugnini CM], “Ordo Missae et Institutio Generalis,” *Notitiae* 5 (1969), 151, 153. In his 1983 memoirs (*La Riforma Liturgica*, 382–3), Mgr. Bugnini repeats the passage word for word and without attribution.

15. Peter Coughlan, *The New Mass: A Pastoral Guide* (Washington: Corpus 1969), 32.

intended to be a statement of the theological and doctrinal principles behind the New Order of Mass. Consilium's 18 November 1969 declaration was little better than a lie.

In a lengthy speech to a general audience on 19 November 1969, Paul VI likewise sought to quell fears over the orthodoxy of the New Order of Mass.¹⁶ Viewed against the new rite as actually promulgated, his words, one is forced to say, have an aura of unreality about them. He assured his hearers that the substance of the Mass had not been altered and that the new rite affirmed the Church's traditional teachings just as unfailingly as the old rite did — but he limited himself to this general statement, and provided no specific examples from the rite itself.

Paul VI also stated that the new rite “puts an end to uncertainty” and “summons us back to that uniformity of rites and attitudes that is proper to the Catholic Church.” But as a cursory reading of the General Instruction will show (or even a visit to an unfamiliar parish on a Sunday), the Mass Paul VI promulgated allows endless options and adaptations, the very opposite of a “uniformity of rites and attitudes.”

Cardinal Ottaviani himself never received a written reply to his letter to Paul VI.¹⁷ In late November, the cardinal checked into a hospital during another bout with the eye disease that periodically left him blind. In his diary he noted

16. Address to a general audience on the New Order of Mass about to be introduced, 19 November 1969, DOL 1757–9.

17. Emilio Cavaterra, *Il Prefetto del Sant' Offizio: Le Opere e i Giorni del Cardinale Ottaviani* (Milan: Mursia 1990), 78.

that his audience with Paul VI which followed on 7 December was: "A bit rough at the beginning, due to the recollections of my letter and Bacci's on the New Mass."¹⁸

As a result of this encounter, Cardinal Ottaviani would henceforth remain silent in the face of any public discussion about his position on the New Mass. His diary entry for 8 January 1970 reads: "In Germany, little stories about my declarations on the New Mass." This is followed by one word: "Silence..." Emilio Cavaterra, who wrote a book based on Ottaviani's diaries, said of this entry that one can almost see the cardinal making a gesture to show that his lips are sealed.¹⁹

With this in mind, we turn to the attempt made in the following month to undermine the *Intervention's* impact by trying to disassociate it from Cardinal Ottaviani.

An Ottaviani Retraction?

In February 1970 a French clergyman, Dom Gerard Lafond, published a defense of the New Order of Mass entitled *Note Doctrinale sur le nouvel Ordo Missae*. Among other things, the *Note* claimed that Cardinal Ottaviani had been the author of certain passages in the New Order of Mass, that these passages were the same ones attacked in the *Critical Study*, that the cardinal had not approved the *Critical Study*, and that it is probable that its contents were

18: Quoted Cavaterra, 117.

19. *Il Prefetto...*, 122.

withheld from him. No proof was given to substantiate these allegations.²⁰

The following month Dom Lafond published the facsimile of a letter Cardinal Ottaviani was alleged to have written to him on 17 February 1970. In this letter the cardinal is said to have stated that: (1) he examined the *Note Doctrinale*, (2) he not only approved of it but congratulates Dom Lafond on the dignity of its expression, (3) he did not authorize the publication of his letter to Paul VI, and (4) his hesitations over the *Novus Ordo* have been put to rest by the discourses Paul VI gave on 19 and 26 November.²¹

We have spoken of the 17 February letter as something Cardinal Ottaviani is “alleged” to have written. Is there any reason to suspect the letter’s authenticity?

First, it seems somewhat strange that the cardinal would have approved of the *Note Doctrinale*. The work, after all, contained statements which in effect were calumnies against him.²²

Second, the 17 February letter leaves the impression that the *Intervention* had been published without the cardinal’s authorization. This too seems somewhat strange — for on two separate occasions (in October 1969 and again after the 17 February letter was published) the cardinal did in fact personally authorize two different individuals to publish the *Intervention*.²³

20. Davies, 487–8.

21. For the full text, see Davies, 495–6.

22. Davies, 489.

23. See Jean Madiran’s comments, Davies, 491.

Third, in his book on Ottaviani's diaries, Emilio Cavaterra says nothing about the 17 February letter. Had the letter been authentic, it would have provided Cavaterra, who sought to explain away the cardinal's hesitations about the New Mass, with an ideal opportunity to show that Ottaviani's worries had been put to rest.

Cavaterra, moreover, quotes from his interview with Msgr. Gilberto Agustoni, the cardinal's secretary, who likewise tried to distance Ottaviani from the *Intervention*. Msgr. Agustoni, too, is silent about the letter, which, had it been authentic, would have supported the monsignor's contention that the cardinal always maintained "a positive attitude" towards the liturgical reform.²⁴

Fourth, there is the matter of Msgr. Agustoni himself. He himself had signed the *Note Doctrinale*. It would have been in his interest to secure the cardinal's approval as well. A number of traditionalist writers pointed this out in 1970, and noted that, since Cardinal Ottaviani was blind by this time, it would have been child's play for Msgr. Agustoni to have tricked the cardinal into signing the 17 February letter.

At first blush the charge seems far-fetched. Since 1970, however, some interesting facts about Msgr. Agustoni have come to light. Consider the following:

- Msgr. Agustoni was a member of Consilium, and also had been responsible (together with Benno Cardinal Gut, Mgr. Paul Phillipe and Mgr. Annibale Bugnini) for approving the final version of the new Eucharistic

24. Agustoni's comments are quoted in Cavaterra, 118.

Prayers²⁵ — texts the *Intervention* had denounced as compromising Catholic teaching.

- Msgr. Agustoni by this time also served on the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, the Vatican body responsible for implementing the liturgical reform. He had been appointed to the post on 12 September 1969²⁶ — the day before Cardinal Ottaviani signed the letter to Paul VI approving of the contents of the *Intervention*.
- Among the 12 members of Study Group 10, the section of Consilium directly responsible for creating the New Order of Mass, we find a certain Father Luigi Agustoni²⁷ — the brother of none other than Msgr. Gilberto Agustoni.
- And finally (as they say), the clincher: On 24 May 1966 three members of Consilium sent Paul VI a lengthy and detailed memorandum proposing a New Order of Mass which was nearly identical to the one he would promulgate in 1969. This proposed *Ordo Missae* contained all the elements which the *Intervention* would denounce in 1969. This memorandum was prepared by Mgr. Bugnini, Mgr. Anton Hänggi — and Msgr. Gilberto Agustoni.²⁸

25. Bugnini, *La Riforma*, 456.

26. Bugnini, *La Riforma*, 919.

27. Bugnini, *La Riforma*, 332.

28. See Johannes Wagner, “Zur Reform de Ordo Missae: Zwei Dokumente,” in Pierre Jounel et al. editors, *Liturgia Opera Divina e Umana*, (Rome: CLV Edizioni Liturgiche 1982), 263, 267–89.

Msgr. Agustoni, therefore, had much to gain by attempting to disassociate Cardinal Ottaviani from the *Intervention*. In light of this, it becomes much less difficult to imagine a blind cardinal signing a letter whose actual contents have been misrepresented by his secretary. Stranger things, after all, have occurred in the history of the Vatican.

While the foregoing facts were unknown in 1970, a public dispute over the authenticity of the 17 February letter erupted nevertheless. Jean Madiran, the editor of the respected French journal *Itinéraires*, publicly accused Msgr. Agustoni of obtaining the cardinal's signature by fraud. Shortly thereafter Msgr. Agustoni relinquished his position as the cardinal's secretary.²⁹

Whatever one may care to surmise from the foregoing, two points are clear: (1) No claim has ever been made that the other signatory of the letter to Paul VI, Cardinal Bacci, ever retracted or modified his position. (2) The Vatican itself ignored the affair of the 17 February letter,³⁰ and treated the *Intervention's* charges as grave enough to warrant yet another response.

"A Climate of Suspicion"

When Paul VI promulgated the New Order of Mass in April 1969, the rest of the new Missal (the part containing the variable prayers proper to each Sunday and feast) had

29. For an account of the whole affair, see *Itinéraires* 142 (April 1970), and Davies, 485–92.

30. Mgr. Bugnini, in whose interest it would have been to trumpet a retraction by the cardinal, had it occurred, is utterly silent on the matter.

yet to be completed. Paul VI's Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum* had set 30 November 1969, the First Sunday of Advent, as the date when the new Missal would become obligatory.

But the controversy *The Ottaviani Intervention* started forced the Vatican to delay publication until the objections could be addressed³¹ — objections which, as one liturgist said, “engendered a climate of suspicion regarding the theological foundations of the New Order of Mass.”³² A lengthy and permanent defense of the New Mass was needed, or else the chorus of protest would never die down.

The Congregation for Divine Worship asked Paul VI to write a *Motu Proprio* defending the orthodoxy and legitimacy of the New Mass. He eventually suggested adding an explanatory Foreword (*Proemium*) to the new Missal. On 14 February 1970 Paul VI met with Father Bugnini and decided that the Foreword should defend the new Missal's conformity to tradition and should demonstrate that the doctrine of the New Mass was identical to that of the old.³³

An Ephemeral Document

The result when the Missal finally appeared in March 1970 was a new 8-page Foreword to the General Instruction. At first reading, it sounds nearly “Tridentine” — as

31. See Bugnini, *La Riforma*, 389.

32. Alessandro Pistoia CM, “Il ‘Proemium’ e le Modifiche della ‘Institutio Generalis’: Commento,” *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 84 (1970), 241–2.

33. See Bugnini, *La Riforma*, 390–1.

one would expect, since the liturgists claimed it “guarantees the doctrinal orthodoxy of the New Order of Mass.”³⁴

The author of the Foreword, however, was faced with an impossible task: superimposing a traditional theology of the Mass on a rite composed with entirely different principles in mind. The teachings the Foreword expresses, hence, are contradicted by elements of the new rite itself. Here are some examples:

- The Foreword states that the New Mass “constantly” expresses the Council of Trent’s teaching on the sacrificial nature of the Mass.

To support this contention, however, the Foreword was able to cite only two phrases in the new rite: one in Eucharistic Prayer III and the other in Eucharistic Prayer IV³⁵ — hardly, it must be said, a “constant” expression of the teaching of the Council of Trent. One is left to draw the reasonable conclusion, moreover, that when Eucharistic Prayer II is used, the New Order of Mass does *not* express the sacrificial character of the Mass — precisely one of the points which *The Ottaviani Intervention* makes.

- The Foreword states that the New Mass proclaims belief in the Real Presence and transubstantiation by “the spirit and expression of reverence in which the Eucharistic liturgy is carried out.”³⁶

While this is an edifying thought, one has but to look

34. See for instance: Pistoia, “Il ‘Proemium’... Commento,” 244.

35. Foreword §2, DOL 1377.

36. Foreword §3, DOL 1378.

to the new rite itself to see that most of the old external expressions of reverence for the Sacrament are gone. As the *Intervention* pointed out, all but three genuflections are abolished, the Blessed Sacrament is relegated to a hiding place outside the nave of the Church, kneeling for communion is eliminated, and just about every other mark of belief in the Real Presence has been removed.

- In an attempt to rebut the *Intervention's* charge that the New Mass contradicts Catholic teaching on the priesthood, the Foreword referred readers to the new Preface for the Mass of Chrism.³⁷

This Mass, however, is celebrated but once a year, and then only by the diocesan bishop. And when we examine the text the Foreword cites, we discover that, far from re-affirming the traditional understanding of the priesthood, this Preface leaves the clear impression that the ordained priesthood arises out of the “priesthood of believers,”³⁸ a thoroughly Protestant concept.

Other examples could be given.³⁹ Conservative defenders

37. Foreword §4, DOL 1379.

38. See *Missale Romanum* (1970), 241. The prayer begins with “the priesthood of believers,” and then passes on to speak of “sharers in ministry by the imposition of hands”: “You have constituted Your only-begotten Son High Priest of the New and eternal covenant by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and so deigned to order things in Your ineffable plan that His one priesthood would be preserved in the Church. For He *not only* adorned *His own people* with the royal priesthood, *but also* by His brotherly goodness chose men to become sharers in His ministry by the imposition of hands.” My translation and emphasis.

39. See my study of both the Foreword and the 1970 General Instruction in Chapter 7 of *Work of Human Hands: A Theological Critique of the Mass of Paul VI*, my book on the New Mass.

of the *Novus Ordo* often cite this document as proof that the new rite reflects the Church's constant teaching on the nature of the Mass. Their confidence, alas, is misplaced. Suffice it to say that the lofty thoughts and traditional sentiments expressed in the Foreword are almost inevitably brought low by the reality of the new rite.

The English liturgist Father Crichton, an enthusiast for the reforms, perhaps best summed up the Foreword when he called it "a controversial statement, intended to rebut the criticisms of the new Order, and in the nature of the case a very ephemeral document."⁴⁰

"The Cleverness of the Revisers"

As a direct result of the *Intervention's* criticisms of the 1969 General Instruction, the new Missal published in March 1970 contained not only the new Foreword but also a revised General Instruction. Since Consilium maintained all along, however, that there was nothing wrong with the Instruction in the first place, the changes were introduced with some verbal legerdemain.

This came in a document called a "Presentation,"⁴¹ a statement so convoluted that it could have come out of the Ministry of Truth in George Orwell's *1984*. Its line of reasoning — if such it can be called — ran roughly as follows:

40. J.D. Crichton, *Christian Celebration: The Mass* (London: Geoffrey Chapman 1971), 47–8.

41. SC Divine Worship, Presentation *Edita Instructione*, May 1970, DOL 1371.

(1) Some points in the Instruction “did not come across clearly because of the difficulty of keeping all the contents in mind.” (2) Complaints against the new rite “were based on a prejudice against anything new; these were not worth considering because they are groundless.” (3) Consilium itself, after all, had examined the Instruction and “found no reason for changing the arrangement of the material and no errors in doctrine.” (4) Nevertheless, “to overcome problems” the decision was made “to supplement or rewrite the text of the General Instruction in some places.” (5) And finally, “these emendations are in fact few.”

Naturally, the passages affected — the list covered 16 pages⁴² — were the ones the *Intervention* had criticized the most strongly. Father Crichton tartly noted: “The procedure is obvious: every time there is an incriminated expression, what may be called for short a ‘Tridentine’ phrase is put beside it.”⁴³ We cite a few examples which illustrate the revisers’ method:

- When the *Intervention* criticized the new definition of Mass as “assembly,” Consilium replied that the passage was not a *definition*, but merely a simple *description* of the Mass. The disputed passage in the Instruction, therefore, was slightly recast to reflect the new position. Moreover, rather than speaking of “*the Lord’s Supper* or Mass”

42. They are given in “Variationes in ‘Institutionem Generalem Missalis Romani’ Inductae,” *Notitiae* 6 (1970), 177–93. The original and the revised versions are given side by side in “Variationes Praecipuae in Institutionem Inductae,” *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 84 (1970), 233–40.

43. *Christian Celebration*, 52.

— another sore point — the revised definition transposed the terms and spoke of “*the Mass* or Lord’s Supper.” As well, where the original definition spoke of the Mass merely as a memorial, the new version adds the phrase “or eucharistic sacrifice.”⁴⁴

- In an attempt to deal with the *Intervention*’s attack on the original Instruction for omitting the mention of transubstantiation, the revised version speaks of Christ as being present “substantially and permanently under the eucharistic elements.”⁴⁵ Together with this phrase, however, the revised Instruction added other “presences” of Christ: in the assembly, in Scripture, and in the minister. Thus these are made to appear equivalent to Christ’s substantial presence. The word “transubstantiation” — a red flag for Protestants — is still not employed.
- The *Intervention* pointed out how the priest’s role was reduced to that of a mere “president of the assembly.” In one paragraph in the revised Instruction, the notion that the priest acts “in the person of Christ” has been restored.⁴⁶ This still does not remove the false notion, implied elsewhere in the Instruction, that the people “offer” or “celebrate” the Mass. In other passages, moreover, the priest continues to be referred to as a “president” or “one who presides.”

Many souls found the addition of a handful of traditional

44. GI §7, DOL 1397.

45. GI §7, DOL 1397.

46. GI §60, DOL 1450.

terms reassuring. Others have demonstrated, however, that the revisions do not remedy the defects of the original Instruction.⁴⁷

In arriving at an assessment of the New Order of Mass, what weight should we give to the changes in the General Instruction?

Father Crichton's observation provides us with a clue: in each passage cited above, the revisers merely introduced a "Tridentine" term as an equivalent to a new term. Since the Instruction presents the terms as equivalent, it is reasonable to conclude that one is free to regard the Mass as either:

(1) A propitiatory sacrifice, offered by an ordained priest, in which Christ becomes present under the appearances of bread and wine through transubstantiation; or

(2) An assembly-supper, co-celebrated by the congregation and its president, during which Christ is present in the people, the Scripture readings and in the bread and wine.

The first position is the doctrine of the Council of Trent; the second, the position of Protestantism and neo-Modernism. Subsequently it would be the latter position — the Mass as "assembly-supper" — which would pervade the writings of the overwhelming majority of modern liturgists, and which would provide the theoretical justification for countless aberrations and abuses.

Is it stretching the plain meaning of the 1970 Instruction

47. Rama P. Coomaraswamy, *The Problems with the New Mass* (Rockford IL: TAN 1990), 69–75; Arnaldo Xavier da Silveira, *La Nouvelle Messe de Paul VI: Qu'en Penser?*, (Chiré-en-Montreuil, France: Diffusion de la Pensée Française 1975), 99–124.

to claim that, even with all its traditional-sounding phrases, it *still* leads us away from the teaching of the Council of Trent and towards Protestantism? For an answer we turn to an article written five years later by a member of Consilium, the Rev. Emil Joseph Lengeling:

“In the 1969 General Instruction on the Missal, an ecumenically-oriented sacramental theology for the celebration of Mass emerged.... Despite the new 1970 edition forced by reactionary attacks — but which avoided the worst, thanks to the cleverness of the revisers — it leads us... out of the dead end of the post-Tridentine theories of sacrifice, and corresponds to the agreements signalled by many of last year’s interfaith documents.”⁴⁸

A Theoretical Exercise

We have spoken at some length of the changes in the General Instruction. Did the controversy which the *Intervention* provoked also lead Rome to make changes in the New Order of Mass so that the rite itself would reflect a more “Tridentine” theology?

In a word, no. The revisions of terminology in the 1970 Instruction had no practical effect whatsoever on either the prayers or the rubrics of the New Order of Mass. The

48. “Tradition und Fortschritt in der Liturgie,” *Liturgisches Jahrbuch* 25 (1975), 218–9.

revised Instruction turned out to be a purely theoretical exercise — as if an architect, confronted with evidence that a building he designed was unsafe, had altered his drawings, but left the tottering structure itself exactly as it was built.

The Order of Mass now employed in parish churches, therefore, is identical to the *Novus Ordo* promulgated in 1969, and the theological principles on which it was based — ecumenically-oriented and anti-Tridentine, as Father Lengeling approvingly noted — are those set forth in the 1969 General Instruction.

Backhanded Tributes

In passing, finally, we should note that the Roman liturgists responsible for creating the New Mass paid their own sort of backhanded tributes to the *Intervention* long after it appeared in 1969.

In 1982, a full thirteen years later, Mgr. Bugnini, the Great Architect of the Liturgical Revolution, expended much effort in his memoirs defending the so-called reform against charges of unorthodoxy. Time and again, when he tried either explicitly or implicitly to head off some accusation against the doctrinal purity of his work, we can trace the charge, one way or another, back to *The Ottaviani Intervention*.

Nor was he alone. Later in 1982, the Rev. Carlo Braga CM, Mgr. Bugnini's second-in-command at Consilium and the author of the 1969 General Instruction, still felt compelled to write a study defending the Catholicity of

the reform.⁴⁹ One quickly discerns from his strained arguments that there was no need at all for him to write his article — except to shadow-box with the still-troubling spectre of *The Ottaviani Intervention*.

Summary

Our brief account of the background to *The Ottaviani Intervention* has touched upon various topics. We will now sum up briefly some of the principal points:

(1) The *Intervention* and the controversy which followed over the new *Ordo Missae* and the 1969 General Instruction delayed the final publication of Paul VI's new Missal for about six months.

(2) Consilium claimed at the time that the General Instruction was merely intended to be a pastoral or a rubrical instruction, rather than a *doctrinal* statement. This was little better than a lie, since those involved most directly with creating the new Order of Mass had previously characterized the Instruction as a *doctrinal* or *theological* statement.

(3) Some have claimed that Cardinal Ottaviani in a 17 February 1970 letter “retracted” his position on the New Order of Mass. There is, however, a large body of circumstantial evidence which indicates that, if the cardinal did indeed sign the letter, his signature was obtained fraudulently.

49. Carlo Braga CM, “Punti Qualificanti della I.G.M.R.,” in Jounel, 243–61. For an indication of Braga's theological perspective vis-à-vis the liturgy, see Anthony Cekada, *The Problems with the Prayers of the Modern Mass* (Rockford, IL: TAN 1991).

The circumstantial evidence all points to the cardinal's secretary, Msgr. Gilberto Agustoni, as the culprit. Msgr. Agustoni, who played an important role in formulating the *Ordo Missae* which the *Intervention* so strongly condemned, had the motive and the opportunity to do the deed.

(4) In response to the *Intervention's* criticisms, Paul VI ordered that a Foreword be inserted into the final edition of the Missal. The purpose of the Foreword was to vindicate the orthodoxy of the new rite. The Foreword fails in this regard, since there is a dearth of evidence in the new rite itself to support the Foreword's contentions.

(5) Consilium also issued a revised version of the General Instruction. This was an ephemeral document, merely intended to rebut the *Intervention's* criticisms. The revised General Instruction employs equivocal language to this end, and thus presents two different understandings of the Mass -- one Catholic, the other Protestant or neo-Modernist -- as equivalent. This equivocation was intentional.

(6) The *Intervention* had levelled its charges not only against the 1969 General Instruction, but also against the new rite for the Order of Mass. Despite this, *no changes whatsoever* were made in the rite itself. The doctrinal and theological foundations of this rite are to be found in the 1969 General Instruction. The 1969 General Instruction, as the *Intervention* pointed out, presents a theology of the Mass which implicitly repudiates Catholic teaching on the sacrificial character of the Mass, on the role of the priest, on transubstantiation and on many other points. The new

rite based on this new theology continues to be used to this day in parishes throughout the world.



In the foregoing account we have seen how *The Ottaviani Intervention* influenced the 1970 General Instruction. Despite its importance as a historical document, the *Intervention* has not been widely available in the U.S. for some years now. I decided to undertake a fresh translation, in hopes of producing a version which would be both faithful to the sense of the original and comprehensible to the average reader.

The significance of *The Ottaviani Intervention* goes beyond mere historical considerations, however. Since 1969 we have seen the Mass progressively desacralized, made subject to countless aberrations and abuses, and emptied of doctrines essential to the integrity of the Catholic faith. The blame for this painful turn of events has often been laid at the feet of an increasingly “progressive” clergy. *The Ottaviani Intervention*, however, forces us to consider whether the prevalent liturgical abuses are but the natural outgrowth of principles imbedded in the new rite itself — and thus whether the officially-sanctioned reform did indeed turn out to be, as the *Intervention* warned, “an incalculable error.”

— Rev. Anthony Cekada
1992

Letter



of the Cardinals
to His Holiness Pope Paul VI

Rome

25 September 1969

Most Holy Father:

Having carefully examined and presented for the scrutiny of others the New Order of Mass (*Novus Ordo Missae*) prepared by the experts of the Committee for the Implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, and after lengthy prayer and reflection, we feel obliged before God and Your Holiness to set forth the following considerations:

1. The accompanying *Critical Study* is the work of a select group of theologians, liturgists and pastors of souls. Despite its brevity, the study shows quite clearly that 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. The pastoral reasons put forth to justify such a grave break with tradition, even if such reasons could still hold good in the face of doctrinal considerations, do not seem sufficient to us. The innovations in the *Novus Ordo* and the fact that all that is of perennial value finds only a minor place — if it subsists at all — could well turn into a certainty the suspicion, already prevalent, alas, in many circles, that

truths which have always been believed by the Christian people can be changed or ignored without infidelity to that sacred deposit of doctrine to which the Catholic faith is bound forever. The recent reforms have amply demonstrated that new changes in the liturgy could not be made without leading to complete bewilderment on the part of the faithful, who already show signs of restiveness and an indubitable lessening of their faith. Among the best of the clergy, the result is an agonizing crisis of conscience, numberless instances of which come to our notice daily.

3. We are certain that these considerations, prompted by what we hear from the living voice of shepherds and the flock, will find an echo in the heart of Your Holiness, always so profoundly solicitous for the spiritual needs of the children of the Church. The subjects for whose benefit a law is made have always had the right, nay the duty, to ask the legislator to abrogate the law, should it prove to be harmful.

At a time, therefore, when the purity of the faith and the unity of the Church suffer cruel lacerations and still greater perils, daily and sorrowfully echoed in the words of You, our common Father, we most earnestly beseech Your Holiness not to deprive us of the possibility of continuing to have recourse to the integral and fruitful Missal of St. Pius V, so highly praised by Your Holiness, and so deeply loved and venerated by the whole Catholic world.

— A. Card. Ottaviani

— A. Card. Bacci

Short Critical Study



of the New Order of Mass
by a Group of Roman Theologians

I

In October 1967, the Synod of Bishops which met in Rome was asked to pass judgement on an experimental celebration of what was then called a “standard” or “normative” Mass.

This Mass, composed by the Committee for Implementing the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Consilium), aroused very serious misgivings among the bishops present. With 187 members voting, the results revealed considerable opposition (42 negative), many substantial reservations (62 affirmative with reservations) and four abstentions.

The international press spoke of the Synod’s “rejection” of the proposed Mass, while the progressive wing of the religious press passed over the event in silence. A well-known periodical, aimed at bishops and expressing their teaching, summed up the new rite in these terms:

They wanted to make a clean slate of the whole theology of the Mass. It ended up in substance quite close to the Protestant theology which destroyed the sacrifice of the Mass.

Unfortunately, we now find that the same “standard Mass,” identical in substance, has reappeared as the New Order of Mass (*Novus Ordo Missae*) recently promulgated by the Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum* (3 April 1969). In the two years which have passed since the Synod, moreover, it appears that the national bishops’ conferences (at least as such) have not been consulted on the matter.

The Apostolic Constitution states that the old Missal which St. Pius V promulgated on 19 July 1570 — its greater part, in fact, goes back to St. Gregory the Great and even remoter antiquity¹ — was the standard for four centuries whenever priests of the Latin rite celebrated the Holy Sacrifice. The Constitution adds that this Missal, taken to every corner of the earth, “has been an abundant source of spiritual nourishment to so many people in their devotion to God.” Yet the same Constitution, which would definitively end the use of the old Missal, claims that the present reform is necessary because “a deep interest in fostering the liturgy has become widespread and strong among the Christian people.”

It seems obvious that the last claim contains a serious equivocation. If the Christian people expressed anything at all, it was the desire (thanks to the great St. Pius X) to discover the true and immortal treasures of the liturgy. They

1. “The prayers of our Canon are found in the treatise *De Sacramentis* (4th–5th centuries)... Our Mass goes back without essential changes to the epoch in which it developed for the first time from the most ancient common liturgy. It still preserves the fragrance of that primitive liturgy, in times when Caesar governed the world and hoped to extinguish the Christian faith; times when our forefathers would gather together before dawn to sing a hymn to Christ as to their God.... There is not in all Christendom a rite so venerable as that of the Roman Missal.” (Rev. Adrian Fortescue). “The Roman Canon, such as it is today, goes back to St. Gregory the Great. Neither in East nor West is there any Eucharistic prayer remaining in use today that can boast such antiquity. For the Roman Church to throw it overboard would be tantamount, in the eyes not only of the Orthodox, but also of the Anglicans and even Protestants having still to some extent a sense of tradition, to a denial of all claim any more to be the true Catholic Church.” (Rev. Louis Bouyer).

never, absolutely never, asked that the liturgy be changed or mutilated to make it easier to understand. What the faithful *did* want was a better understanding of a unique and unchangeable liturgy — a liturgy they had no desire to see changed.

Catholics everywhere, priests and laymen alike, loved and venerated the Roman Missal of St. Pius V. It is impossible to understand how using this Missal along with proper religious instruction could prevent the faithful from participating in the liturgy more fully or understanding it more profoundly. It is likewise impossible to understand why the old Missal, when its many outstanding merits are recognized, should now be deemed unworthy to continue to nourish the liturgical piety of the faithful.



Since the “standard Mass” now reintroduced and reimposed as the New Order of Mass was already rejected in substance at the Synod, since it was never submitted to the collegial judgement of the national bishops’ conferences, and since the faithful (least of all in mission lands) never asked for any reform of the Mass whatsoever, it is impossible to understand the reasons for the new legislation — legislation which overthrows a tradition unchanged in the Church since the 4th and 5th centuries. Since there are no reasons, therefore, for undertaking this reform, it appears devoid of any rational grounds to justify it and make it acceptable to the Catholic people.

The Second Vatican Council did indeed ask that the

Order of Mass “be revised in a way that will bring out more clearly the intrinsic nature and purpose of its several parts, as also the connection between them.”² We shall now see how the recently-promulgated *Ordo* conforms to the Council’s wishes — wishes now no more than a faint memory.

A point by point examination of the *Novus Ordo* reveals changes so great that they confirm the judgement already made on the “standard Mass” — for on many points it has much to gladden the heart of even the most modernist Protestant.

II

Let us begin with the definition of the Mass. In Article 7 of the General Instruction which precedes the New Order of Mass, we discover the following definition:

The Lord’s Supper or Mass is the sacred assembly or congregation of the people of God gathering together, with a priest presiding, to celebrate the memorial of the Lord.³ For this reason Christ’s promise applies

2. SC §50, DOL 50.

3. A footnote in the Instruction refers us to two texts of Vatican II. But nothing in the texts justifies the new definition, as is evident from the following: “Through the ministry of the bishop, God consecrates priests.... In exercising sacred functions they therefore act as the ministers of him who in the liturgy continually fulfills his priestly office on our behalf.... By the celebration of Mass people sacramentally offer the sacrifice of Christ.” Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests *Presbyterum Ordinis*, 7 December 1965, §5, DOL 260. “For in the liturgy God is speaking to his people and Christ is still proclaiming his Gospel. And the people are responding to God by both song and prayer. Moreover, the prayers

supremely to such a local gathering together of the Church: “Where two or three come together in my name, there am I in their midst.” (Mt 18:20).⁴

The definition of the Mass is thus reduced to a “supper,” a term which the General Instruction constantly repeats.⁵

The Instruction further characterizes this “supper” as an assembly, presided over by a priest and held as a memorial of the Lord to recall what He did on Holy Thursday. None of this in the very least implies:

- The Real Presence.
- The reality of the Sacrifice.
- The sacramental function of the priest who consecrates.
- The intrinsic value of the Eucharistic Sacrifice independent

addressed to God *by the priest*, who presides over the assembly *in the person of Christ*, are said in the name of the entire holy people and of all present.” SC §33, DOL 33. One is at a loss to explain how the Instruction’s definition could have been drawn from these texts. We note too how the new definition of the Mass alters what Vatican II laid down in *Presbyterum Ordinis* §5: “The Eucharistic assembly is the center of the congregation of the faithful.” Since the center in the New Order of the Mass has been fraudulently spirited away, the congregation has now usurped its place.

4. GI §7, DOL 1397 fn.

5. GI §8, DOL 1398; GI §48, DOL 1438 fn; GI §55.d, DOL 1445 fn; GI §56, DOL 1446.

of the presence of the “assembly.”⁶

In a word, the Instruction’s definition implies *none* of the

6. The Council of Trent reaffirms the Real Presence in the following words: “To begin with, the holy council teaches and openly and straightforwardly professes that in the blessed Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, after the consecration of the bread and wine, our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and man, is truly, really and substantially contained under the perceptible species of bread and wine.” DB 874. Session 22 which interests us directly (*De sanctissimo Missae Sacrificio*) clearly synthesized the approved doctrine in nine canons (DB 937a–956): (1) The Mass is not a mere symbolic representation, but rather a true, visible sacrifice, instituted “to re-present the bloody sacrifice which [Christ] accomplished on the cross once and for all. It was to perpetuate his memory until the end of the world. Its salutary strength was to be applied for the remission of the sins that we daily commit.” DB 938. (2) “Declaring himself constituted a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech, [Our Lord] offered his body and blood under the species of bread and wine to God the Father and he gave his body and blood under the same species to the apostles to receive, making them priests of the New Testament at that time.... He ordered the apostles and their successors in the priesthood to offer this sacrifice when he said, ‘Do this in remembrance of me,’ as the Catholic Church has always understood and taught.” DB 938. The celebrant, offerer and sacrificer is the ordained priest, and not the people of God or the assembly: “If anyone says that by the words, ‘Do this in remembrance of me,’ Christ did not make the apostles priests, or that he did not decree that they and other priests should offer his body and blood: let him be anathema.” Canon 2, DB 949. The Sacrifice of the Mass is a true propitiatory sacrifice, and not a simple memorial of the sacrifice offered on the cross: “If anyone says that the Sacrifice of the Mass is merely an offering of praise and of thanksgiving, or that it is a simple memorial of the sacrifice offered on the cross, and not propitiatory, or that it benefits only those who communicate; and that it should not be offered for the living and the dead, for sins, punishments, satisfaction, and other necessities: let him be anathema.” Canon 3, DB 950. Canon 6 should likewise be kept in mind: “If anyone says that there are errors in the Canon of the Mass and that it should therefore be done away with: let him be anathema.” DB 953. Likewise Canon 8: “If anyone says that Masses in which the priest alone communicates sacramentally are illicit and should be done away with: let him be anathema.” DB 955.

dogmatic values which are essential to the Mass and which, taken together, provide its true definition. Here, deliberately omitting these dogmatic values by “going beyond them” amounts, at least in practice, to denying them.⁷

The second part of Article 7 makes this already serious equivocation even worse. It states that Christ’s promise, (“Where two or three come together in my name, there am I in their midst”) applies to this assembly *supremely*.

Thus, the Instruction puts Christ’s promise (which refers only to His *spiritual* presence through grace) on the same qualitative level (save for greater intensity) as the *substantial* and *physical* reality of the sacramental Eucharistic Presence.



The next Article of the Instruction divides the Mass into a “Liturgy of the Word” and a “Liturgy of the Eucharist,” and adds that the “table of God’s Word” and the “table of Christ’s Body” are prepared at Mass so that the faithful may receive “instruction and food.”

As we will see later, this statement improperly joins the two parts of the Mass, as though they possessed equal symbolic value.



The Instruction uses many different names for the Mass, such as:

- Action of Christ and the People of God.

7. It is perhaps superfluous to recall that, if a single defined dogma were denied, all dogma would fall *ipso facto*, insofar as the principle of the infallibility of the supreme hierarchical magisterium, whether conciliar or papal, would thereby be destroyed.

- Lord's Supper or Mass.
- Paschal Banquet.
- Common participation in the Table of the Lord.
- Eucharistic Prayer.
- Liturgy of the Word and Liturgy of the Eucharist.

All these expressions are acceptable when used relatively — but when used separately and absolutely as they are here, they must be completely rejected.

It is obvious that the authors of the *Novus Ordo* obsessively emphasized “supper” and “memorial,” instead of the unbloody renewal of the Sacrifice of the Cross.

Even the phrase in the Instruction describing the Mass as a “memorial of the Passion *and* Resurrection” is inexact. The Mass is the memorial of the unique Sacrifice, redemptive in itself, while the Resurrection is the fruit which *follows* from that sacrifice.⁸ We shall see later how such equivocations are repeated and reiterated both in the formula for the Consecration and throughout the *Novus Ordo* as a whole.

III

We now turn to the ends or purposes of the Mass — what it accomplishes in the supernatural order.

1. **Ultimate Purpose.** The ultimate purpose of the Mass

8. In light of the first prayer after the Consecration in the Roman Canon (*Unde et memores*), the Ascension could also be added. The *Unde et memores*, however, does not lump different realities together. It makes a clear and fine distinction: “calling to mind... the blessed passion, *and also* His rising up from hell and His glorious ascension into heaven.”

is the sacrifice of praise rendered to the Most Holy Trinity. This end conforms to the primary purpose of the Incarnation, explicitly enunciated by Christ Himself: “Coming into the world he saith: sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not, but a body thou hast fitted me.”⁹

In the *Novus Ordo*, this purpose has disappeared:

- From the Offertory, where the prayer *Receive, Holy Trinity, This Oblation* has been removed.
- From the conclusion of Mass, where the prayer honoring the Trinity, *May the Tribute of My Homage, Most Holy Trinity* has been eliminated.
- From the Preface, since the Preface of the Most Holy Trinity, formerly used on all ordinary Sundays, will henceforth be used only on the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity.

2. Ordinary Purpose. The ordinary purpose of the Mass is propitiatory sacrifice — making satisfaction to God for sin.

This end, too, has been compromised. Instead of emphasizing remission of sins for the living and the dead, the new rite stresses the nourishment and sanctification of those present.¹⁰

Now at the Last Supper, Christ the Victim for sin certainly instituted the Eucharist so that we could be united to Him in His Victim state. But this act of sacrificial immolation occurred *before* the Apostles consumed His Body and Blood.

9. Ps 50: 7–9, in Heb 10:5.

10. GI §54, DOL 1444.

Moreover, it possessed full redemptive value in relation to the bloody Sacrifice which would follow, the proof of which is that one can participate in the Mass without receiving Communion sacramentally.¹¹

3. Immanent Purpose. The immanent purpose of the Mass is fundamentally that of sacrifice.

It is essential that the Sacrifice, whatever its nature, be acceptable and pleasing to God. Because of original sin, however, no sacrifice other than the Christ's Sacrifice can claim to be acceptable and pleasing to God in its own right.

The *Novus Ordo* alters the nature of the sacrificial offering by turning it into a type of exchange of gifts between God and man. Man brings the bread, and God turns it into "the bread of life"; man brings the wine, and God turns it into "spiritual drink":

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,
for through your goodness
we have this bread (or wine) to offer,
fruit of the earth (vine) and work of human hands.
It will become for us the bread of life (spiritual
drink).¹²

11. This shift of emphasis occurs in the three new Eucharistic Prayers which eliminate the Memento of the Dead and any mention of souls suffering in Purgatory to whom the propitiatory Sacrifice is applied.

12. See *Mysterium Fidei* in which Paul VI condemns the errors of symbolism together with the new theories of "transignification" and "transfiguration": "it is not allowable... to stress the sign value of the sacrament as if the symbolism, which to be sure all acknowledge in the Eucharist, expresses fully and exhaustively the meaning of Christ's presence; or to discuss the mystery of transubstantiation without mentioning the

The expressions “bread of life” and “spiritual drink,” of course, are utterly vague and could mean anything. Once again, we come up against the same basic equivocation: According to the new definition of the Mass, Christ is only spiritually present among His own; here, bread and wine are only spiritually — and not substantially — changed.¹³

In the Preparation of the Gifts, a similarly equivocal game was played. The old Offertory contained two magnificent prayers, the *Deus qui humanae* and the *Offerimus tibi*:

- The first prayer, recited at the preparation of the chalice, begins: *O God, by whom the dignity of human nature was*

marvelous changing of the whole substance of the bread into the body and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood of Christ as stated by the Council of Trent, so that only what is called ‘transignification’ or ‘transfinalization’ is involved.” Encyclical *Mysterium Fidei* on the doctrine and worship of the Eucharist, 3 September 1965, §11, DOL 1155.

13. *Mysterium Fidei* amply denounces and condemns introducing new formulas or expressions which, though occurring in texts of the Fathers, the Councils and the Church’s magisterium, are used in a univocal sense that is not subordinated to the substance of doctrine with which they form an inseparable whole (e.g., “spiritual nourishment,” “spiritual food,” “spiritual drink,” etc.): “Not only the integrity of the faith, but also its proper mode of expression must be safeguarded, lest, God forbid, by the careless use of words we introduce false notions about the most sublime realities.” He quotes St. Augustine: “We, however, have the obligation to speak according to a definite norm lest the carelessness of our words give rise to impious ideas about the very realities signified by these words.” He continues: “We must religiously respect the rule of terminology; after centuries of effort and under the protection of the Holy Spirit the Church has established it and confirmed it by the authority of councils; that norm often became the watchword and the banner of orthodox belief. Let no one arbitrarily or under the pretext of new science presume to change it.... In like manner we must not put up with anyone’s personal wish to modify the formulas in which the Council of Trent set forth the mystery of the Eucharist for belief.” §§23, 24, DOL 1167–8.

wondrously established and yet more wondrously restored. It recalled man's innocence before the Fall of Adam and his ransom by the blood of Christ, and it summed up the whole economy of the Sacrifice from Adam to the present day.

- The second prayer, which accompanies the offering of the chalice, embodies the idea of propitiation for sin: it implores God for His mercy as it asks that the offering *may ascend with a sweet fragrance in the presence of the Thy divine majesty.* Like the first prayer, it admirably stresses the economy of the Sacrifice.

In the *Novus Ordo*, both these prayers have been eliminated.

In the Eucharistic Prayers, moreover, the repeated petitions to God that He accept the Sacrifice have also been suppressed; thus, there is no longer any clear distinction between divine and human sacrifice.



Having removed the keystone, the reformers had to put up scaffolding. Having suppressed the real purposes of the Mass, they had to substitute fictitious purposes of their own. This forced them to introduce actions stressing the union between priest and faithful, or among the faithful themselves — and led to the ridiculous attempt to superimpose offerings for the poor and for the Church on the offering of the host to be immolated.

The fundamental uniqueness of the Victim to be

sacrificed will thus be completely obliterated. Participation in the immolation of Christ the Victim will turn into a philanthropists' meeting or a charity banquet.

IV

We now consider the essence of the Sacrifice. The New Order of Mass no longer explicitly expresses the mystery of the Cross. It is obscured, veiled, imperceptible to the faithful.¹⁴ Here are some of the main reasons:

1. The Meaning of the Term "Eucharistic Prayer." The meaning the *Novus Ordo* assigns to the so-called "Eucharistic Prayer" is as follows:

The entire congregation joins itself to Christ in acknowledging the great things God has done and in offering the sacrifice.¹⁵

Which sacrifice does this refer to? Who offers the sacrifice? No answer is given to these questions.

The definition the Instruction provides for the "Eucharistic Prayer" reduces it to the following:

The center and summit of the entire celebration begins: the Eucharistic Prayer, a prayer of thanksgiving and sanctification.¹⁶

14. Contradicting what Vatican II prescribed. (Cf. SC, §48, DOL 48.)

15. GI §54, DOL 1444.

16. GI §54, DOL 1444.

The effects of the prayer thus replace the causes.

And of the causes, moreover, not a single word is said. The explicit mention of the purpose of the sacrificial offering, made in the old rite with the prayer *Receive, Most Holy Trinity, This Oblation*, has been suppressed — and replaced with *nothing*. The change in the formula reveals the change in doctrine.

2. Obliteration of the Role of the Real Presence. The reason why the Sacrifice is no longer explicitly mentioned is simple: the central role of the Real Presence has been suppressed. It has been removed from the place it so resplendently occupied in the old liturgy.

In the General Instruction, the Real Presence is mentioned just once — and that in a footnote which is the only reference to the Council of Trent. Here again, the context is that of nourishment.¹⁷ The real and permanent presence of Christ in the transubstantiated species — Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity — is never alluded to. The very word *transubstantiation* is completely ignored.

The invocation of the Holy Ghost in the Offertory — the prayer *Come, Thou Sanctifier* — has likewise been suppressed, with its petition that He descend upon the offering to accomplish the miracle of the Divine Presence again, just as He once descended into the Virgin's womb. This suppression is yet one more instance of the systematic and tacit denial of the Real Presence.

Finally, it is impossible to ignore how ritual gestures and

17: GI §241 fn 69, DOL 1630.

usages expressing faith in the Real Presence have been abolished or changed. The *Novus Ordo* eliminates:

- Genuflections. No more than three remain for the priest, and (with certain exceptions) one for the faithful at the moment of the Consecration.
- Purification of the priest's fingers over the chalice.
- Preserving the priest's fingers from all profane contact after the Consecration.
- Purification of sacred vessels, which need not be done immediately nor made on the corporal.
- Protecting the contents of the chalice with the pall.
- Gilding for the interior of sacred vessels.
- Solemn consecration for movable altars.
- Consecrated stones and relics of the saints in the movable altar or on the "table" when Mass is celebrated outside a sacred place. (The latter leads straight to "eucharistic dinners" in private houses.)
- Three cloths on the altar, reduced to one.
- Thanksgiving for the Eucharist made kneeling, now replaced by the grotesque practice of the priest and people sitting to make their thanksgiving — a logical enough accompaniment to receiving Communion standing.
- All the ancient prescriptions observed in the case of a host which fell, which are now reduced to a single, nearly sarcastic direction: "It is to be picked up reverently."¹⁸

18. GI §239, DOL 1629.

All these suppressions only emphasize how outrageously faith in the dogma of the Real Presence is implicitly repudiated.

3. The Role of the Main Altar. The altar is nearly always called the *table*:¹⁹ “the altar or Lord’s table, which is the center of the whole eucharistic liturgy...”²⁰ The altar must now be detached from the back wall so that the priest can walk around it and celebrate Mass facing the people.²¹ The Instruction states that the altar should be at the center of the assembled faithful, so that their attention is spontaneously drawn to it. Comparing this Article with another, however, seems to exclude outright reserving the Blessed Sacrament on the altar where Mass is celebrated.²² This will signal an irreparable dichotomy between the presence of Christ the High Priest in the priest celebrating the Mass and Christ’s sacramental Presence. Before, they were one and the same Presence.²³

The Instruction now recommends that the Blessed Sacrament be kept in a place apart for private devotion — as

19. The Instruction recognizes the altar’s primary function only once: “At the altar, the sacrifice of the cross is made present under sacramental signs.” GI §259, DOL 1649. This single reference seems insufficient to remove the equivocation resulting from the other, more frequently-used term.

20. GI §49, DOL 1439. Cf. GI §262, DOL 1652.

21. GI §262, DOL 1652.

22. GI §262, DOL 1652, and GI §276, DOL 1666.

23. “To separate tabernacle from altar is to separate two things which by their origin and their nature should remain united.” Pius XII, “Allocution to the International Congress on Pastoral Liturgy,” 22 September 1956, PTL 817. See also Pius XII, Encyclical *Mediator Dei*, 20 November 1947, PTL 550, quoted below.

though It were some sort of relic. Thus, on entering a church, one's attention will be drawn not to a tabernacle, but to a table stripped bare. Once again, private piety is set up against liturgical piety, and altar is set up against altar.

The Instruction urges that hosts distributed for Communion be ones consecrated at the same Mass. It also recommends consecrating a large wafer,²⁴ so that the priest can share a part of it with the faithful.

It is always the same disparaging attitude towards both the tabernacle and every form of Eucharistic piety outside of Mass. This constitutes a new and violent blow to faith that the Real Presence continues as long as the consecrated species remain.²⁵

4. The Formulas for the Consecration. The old formula for the Consecration was a *sacramental* formula, properly speaking, and not merely *narrative*. This was shown above

24. Rarely does the *Novus Ordo* use the word *hostia*. In liturgical books this traditional term has a precise meaning: "victim." Again we encounter a systematic attempt to emphasize only "supper" and "food."

25. Following their customary practice of substituting one thing for another, the reformers made Christ's presence in the proclaimed word equal to the Real Presence. (See GI §7, §54; DOL 1397, 1444.) But Christ's presence when Scripture is proclaimed is of a different nature, and has no reality except when it is taking place (*in usu*). Christ's Real Presence in the consecrated Host, on the other hand, is objective, permanent and independent of the reception of the Sacrament. The formulas "God is speaking to his people," and "Christ is present to the faithful through his own word" (GI §33, DOL 1423) are typically Protestant. Strictly speaking, they have no meaning, since God's presence in the word is mediated, bound to an individual's spiritual act or condition, and only temporary. This formula leads to a tragic error: the conclusion, express or implied, that the Real Presence continues only as long as the Sacrament is in the process of being used — received at communion time, for instance — and that the Real Presence ends when the use ends.

all by three things:

a. The Text Employed. The Scripture text was not used word for word as the formula for the Consecration. St. Paul's expression, *the Mystery of Faith*, was inserted into the text as an immediate expression of the priest's faith in the mystery which the Church makes real through the hierarchical priesthood.

b. Typography & Punctuation. In the old Missal, a period and a new paragraph separated the words *Take ye all of this and eat* from the words of the sacramental form, *This is My Body*. The period and new paragraph marked the passage from a merely *narrative* mode to a *sacramental* and *affirmative* mode which is proper to a true sacramental action.

The words of Consecration in the Roman Missal, moreover, were printed in larger type in the center of the page. Often a different color ink was used.

All these things clearly detached the words from a merely historical context, and combined to give the formula of Consecration a proper and autonomous value.

c. The Anamnesis. The Roman Missal added the words *As often as ye shall do these things, ye shall do them in memory of Me* after the formula of Consecration.

This formula referred not merely to *remembering* Christ or a past event, but to Christ *acting in the here and now*. It was an invitation to recall not merely His Person or the Last Supper, but *to do* what He did *in the way* that He did it.

In the *Novus Ordo*, the words of St. Paul, *Do this in memory of Me*, will now replace the old formula and be daily proclaimed in the vernacular everywhere. This will

inevitably cause hearers to concentrate on the remembrance of Christ as the *end* of the Eucharistic action, rather than as its *beginning*. The idea of *commemoration* will thus soon replace the idea of the Mass as a *sacramental action*.²⁶

The General Instruction emphasizes the narrative mode, further when it describes the Consecration as the *Institution Narrative*,²⁷ and when it adds that, “in fulfillment of the command received from Christ... the Church keeps his *memorial*.”²⁸

All this, in short, changes the *modus significandi* of the words of Consecration — how they show forth the sacramental action taking place. The priest now pronounces the formulas for Consecration as part of a historical narrative, rather than as Christ’s representative issuing the affirmative judgement *This is My Body*.²⁹

26. As the General Instruction describes it, the sacramental action originated at the moment Our Lord gave the Apostles His Body and Blood “to eat” under the appearances of bread and wine. The sacramental action thus no longer consists in the consecratory action and the mystical separation of the Body from the Blood — the very essence of Eucharistic Sacrifice. See *Mediator Dei*, especially Part II, Chapter 1, PTL 551 ff.

27. GI §55.d, DOL 1445 fn.

28. GI §55.d, DOL 1445.

29. As they appear in the context of the *Novus Ordo*, the words of Consecration *could* be valid in virtue of the priest’s intention. But since their validity no longer comes from the force of the sacramental words themselves (*ex vi verborum*) — or more precisely, from the *meaning* (*modus significandi*) the old rite of the Mass gave to the formula — the words of Consecration in the New Order of Mass *could also not be valid*. Will priests in the near future who receive no traditional formation and who rely on the *Novus Ordo* for the intention of “doing what the Church does” validly consecrate at Mass? One may be allowed to doubt it.

Furthermore, the people's Memorial Acclamation which immediately follows the Consecration — *Your holy death, we proclaim, O Lord... until you come* — introduces the same ambiguity about the Real Presence under the guise of an allusion to the Last Judgement. Without so much as a pause, the people proclaim their expectation of Christ at the end of time just at the moment when He is *substantially present* on the altar — as if Christ's *real* coming will occur only at the end of time rather than there on the altar itself.

The second optional Memorial Acclamation brings this out even more strongly:

When we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus,
until you come in glory.

The juxtaposition here of entirely different realities — immolation and eating, the Real Presence and Christ's second Coming — brings ambiguity to a new height.³⁰

V

We now consider the question of who performs the Sacrifice. In the old rite, these were, in order: Christ, the priest, the Church and the faithful.

1. The Role of the Faithful in the New Rite. In the New

30. Let it not be said, following the methods of Protestant biblical scholarship, that these phrases belong in the same scriptural context. The Church always avoided superimposing and juxtaposing the texts precisely in order to avoid confusing the different realities they express.

Mass, the true altar, to the faithful a sacramental assembly — and hence completely false. This is obvious not only from the new definition of the Mass ("the sacred assembly or congregation of the people gathered together...") but also from the General Instruction's observation that the priest's opening greeting is meant to convey to the assembled community the "presence" of the Lord:

"Then, through his greeting the priest declares to the assembled community that the Lord is present. His greeting and response express the mystery of the gathered Church."³¹

Is this the presence of Christ? Yes, but only a spiritual presence. A mystery of the Church? Certainly — but only insofar as the assembly manifests and asks for Christ's presence.

The new notion is stressed over and over again by

- *Continuous reference to the sacramental character of the Mass.*³²
- The *rejection of distinction between Mass with a Congregation and Mass without a Congregation.*³³
- The description of the prayer of the faithful as a part of the Mass where "the people, exercising their priestly office, intercede for all humanity."³⁴ The faithful's "priestly

31. Cf. §§28, 100J, 1418.

32. Cf. §§74–152, 100J, 1464–542.

33. Cf. §§209–31, 100J, 1599–621.

34. Cf. §45, 100J, 1435.

office” is presented equivocally, as if it were autonomous, by omitting to mention that it is subordinated to the priest, who, as consecrated mediator, presents the people’s petitions to God during the Canon of the Mass.

The *Novus Ordo*’s Eucharistic Prayer III addresses the following prayers to the Lord:

From age to age you gather a people to yourself,
so that from east to west
 a perfect offering may be made to the glory of your name.

The *so that* in the passage makes it appear that the *people*, rather than the *priest*, are the indispensable element in the celebration. Since it is never made clear, even here, who offers the sacrifice, the people themselves appear as possessing *autonomous priestly powers*.³⁵ From this step, it would not be surprising if, before long, the people were permitted to join with the priest in pronouncing the words of Consecration. Indeed, in some places this has already happened.

2. The Role of the Priest in the New Rite. The role of the priest is minimized, changed and falsified:

- In relation to the people, he is now a mere *president* or *brother*, rather than the consecrated minister who celebrates Mass “in the person of Christ.”

35. Against the Lutherans and Calvinists who teach that all Christians are priests and offerers of the Lord’s Supper, see A. Tanqueray, *Synopsis Theologiae Dogmaticae*, (Paris, Tournai, Rome: Desclée 1930), v. III: “Each and every priest is, strictly speaking, a secondary minister of the Sacrifice of the Mass. Christ Himself is the principal minister. The faithful offer *through the intermediary of the the priest, but not in a strict sense.*” Cf. Council of Trent, Session 22, Canon 2, DB 949.

- In relation to the Church, the priest is now merely one member among others, someone taken from the people. In its treatment of the invocation of the Holy Ghost in the Eucharistic Prayer (the *epiclesis*), the General Instruction attributes the petitions anonymously to the Church.³⁶ The priest's part has vanished.
- In the new Penitential Rite which begins the Mass, the *Confiteor* has now become collective; hence the priest is no longer judge, witness and intercessor before God. It is logical therefore that he no longer recites the prayer of absolution which followed it and has now been suppressed. The priest is now "integrated" with his brothers; even the altar boy who serves at a "Mass without a Congregation" calls the priest "brother."
- Formerly, the priest's Communion was ritually distinct from the people's Communion. The *Novus Ordo* suppresses this important distinction. This was the moment when Christ the Eternal High Priest and the priest who acts in the person of Christ came together in closest union and completed the Sacrifice.
- Not a word is said, moreover, about the priest's power as "sacrificer," his consecratory action or how as intermediary he brings about Eucharistic presence. He now appears as nothing more than a Protestant minister.
- By abolishing or rendering optional many of the priestly vestments — in some cases only an alb and stole are now

36. GI §55, DOL 1445.

required³⁷ — the new rite obliterates the priest's conformity to Christ even more. The priest is no longer clothed with all Christ's virtues. He is now a mere "graduate" with one or two tokens that barely separate him from the crowd³⁸ — "a little more a man than the rest," to quote a modern Dominican's unintentionally humorous definition.³⁹ Here, as when they set up altar against altar, the reformers separated that which was united: the one Priesthood of Christ, the Word of God.

3. The Role of the Church in the New Rite. Finally, there is the Church's position in relation to Christ.

In only one instance — in its treatment of the form of Mass without a Congregation — does the General Instruction admit that the Mass is "the action of Christ and the Church."⁴⁰

In the case of Mass with a Congregation, however, the only object the Instruction hints at is "remembering Christ" and sanctifying those present. "The priest celebrant," it says, "joins the people to himself in offering the sacrifice through

37. GI §298, DOL 1688 fn.

38. We note in passing an unthinkable innovation which will have disastrous psychological effects: employing *red* vestments on Good Friday instead of black (GI §308.b, DOL 1698) — as if Good Friday were the commemoration of just another martyr, instead of the day on which the whole Church mourns for her Founder. (Cf. *Mediator Dei*, PTL 550, quoted below.)

39. Rev. A.M. Rouget OP, speaking to the Dominican Sisters of Bethany at Plessis Chenet. [Father Rouget was one of the liturgists involved in creating the *Novus Ordo*.]

40. GI §4, DOL 1394. Cf. *Presbyterum Ordinis* §13, DOL 265.

Christ in the Spirit to the Father”⁴¹ — instead of saying that the people join themselves *to Christ* who *offers Himself* through the Holy Ghost to the Father.

In this context, the following points should likewise be noted:

- The many grave omissions of the phrase *through Christ Our Lord*, a formula which guarantees that God will hear the Church’s prayers in every age.⁴²
- An all-pervading “paschalism” — an obsessive emphasis on Easter and the Resurrection — almost as if there were no other aspects of the communication of grace which, while quite different, are nevertheless equally important.
- The strange and dubious “eschatologism” — a stress upon Christ’s Second Coming and the end of time — whereby the permanent and eternal reality of the communication of grace is reduced to something within the bonds of time. We hear of a people of God on the march, a pilgrim Church — a Church no longer *militant* against the powers of darkness, but one which, having lost its link with eternity, marches to a future envisioned in purely temporal terms.

In Eucharistic Prayer IV the Church — One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic — is abased by eliminating the Roman Canon’s petition for *all orthodox believers who keep the Catholic and Apostolic faith*. These are now merely *all who seek you with a sincere heart*.

41. GI §60, DOL 1450 fn.

42. See Jn 14:13–6, 23–4.

The Memento of the Dead in the Canon, moreover, is offered not as before for those who are gone before us *with the sign of faith*, but merely for *those who have died in the peace of Christ*. To this group — with further detriment to the notion of the Church's visible unity — Eucharistic Prayer IV adds the great crowd of *all the dead whose faith is known to you alone*.

None of the three new Eucharistic Prayers, moreover, allude to a suffering state for those who have died; none allow the priest to make special Mementos for the dead. All this necessarily *undermines faith in the propitiatory and redemptive nature of the sacrifice*.⁴³

Everywhere desacralizing omissions debase the mystery of the Church. Above all, the Church's nature as a sacred hierarchy is disregarded. The second part of the new collective *Confiteor* reduces the Angels and Saints to anonymity; in the first part, in the person of St. Michael the Archangel, they have disappeared as witnesses and judges.⁴⁴ In the Preface for Eucharistic Prayer II — and this is unprecedented — the various angelic hierarchies have disappeared. Also suppressed, in the third prayer of the old Canon, is the memory of the holy Pontiffs and Martyrs on whom the Church in Rome was founded; without a doubt, these were the saints who handed down the apostolic tradition finally

43. In some translations of the Roman Canon, the phrase *a place of refreshment, light and peace* was rendered as a simple state: "blessedness, light, peace." What can be said then of the disappearance of every explicit reference to the Church Suffering?

44. Amidst this flurry of omissions, only one element has been added: the mention in the *Confiteor* of *what I have failed to do*.

completed under Pope St. Gregory as the Roman Mass. The prayer after the Our Father, the *Libera Nos*, now suppresses the mention of the Blessed Virgin, the holy Apostles and all the Saints; their intercession is thus no longer sought, even in times of danger.

Everywhere except in the Roman Canon, the *Novus Ordo* eliminates not only the names of the Apostles Peter and Paul, founders of the Church in Rome, but also the names of the other Apostles, the foundation and mark of the one and universal Church. This intolerable omission, extending even to the three new Eucharistic Prayers, compromises the unity of the Church.

The New Order of Mass further attacks the dogma of the Communion of Saints by suppressing the Blessing and the salutation *The Lord Be with You* when the priest says Mass without a server. It also eliminates the *Ite Missa Est* even in Masses celebrated with a server.⁴⁵

The double *Confiteor* at the beginning of the Mass showed how the priest, vested as Christ's minister and bowing profoundly, acknowledged himself unworthy of both his sublime mission and the "tremendous mystery" he was to enact. Then, in the prayer *Take Away Our Sins*, he acknowledged his unworthiness to enter the Holy of Holies,

45. At the press conference introducing the *Novus Ordo*, Rev. Joseph Lécuyer CSSp, professing what seemed a purely rationalist faith, discussed changing the priest's salutations in Mass without a Congregation from plural to singular. (*Pray, brother*, for example, replaces *Pray, brethren*.) His reason was "so that there would be nothing [in the Mass] which does not correspond with the truth." [Father Lécuyer also participated in creating the New Order of Mass.]

recommending himself with the prayer *We Beseech Thee, O Lord* to the merits and intercession of the martyrs whose relics were enclosed in the altar. Both prayers have been suppressed. What was said previously about elimination of the two-fold *Confiteor* and Communion rite is equally relevant here.



The outward setting of the Sacrifice, a sign of its sacred character, has been profaned. See, for example, the new provisions for celebrating Mass outside a church: a simple table, containing neither a consecrated altar-stone nor relics and covered with a single cloth, is allowed to suffice for an altar.⁴⁶ Here too, all we have said previously in regard to the Real Presence applies — disassociation of the “banquet” and the Sacrifice of the supper from the Real Presence itself.

The process of desacralization is made complete, thanks to the new and grotesque procedure for the Offertory Procession, the reference to ordinary (rather than unleavened) bread, and allowing servers (and even lay people, when receiving Communion under both species) to handle sacred vessels.⁴⁷ Then there is the distracting atmosphere created in the church: the ceaseless comings and goings of priest, deacon, subdeacon, cantor, commentator — the priest himself becomes a commentator, constantly required to “explain” what he is about to do — of lectors (men and women), of servers or laymen welcoming people at the door and escorting them to their places, while others carry

46. GI §260, §265; DOL 1650, 1655.

47. GI §244.d, DOL 1634.

and sort offerings. And in an era of frenzy for a "return to Scripture," we now find, in contradiction of both the Old Testament and St. Paul, the presence of "a suitable woman" who for the first time in the Church's history is authorized to proclaim the Scripture readings and "perform other ministries outside the sanctuary."⁴⁸ Finally, there is the mania for concelebration which will ultimately destroy the priest's Eucharistic piety by overshadowing the central figure of Christ, sole Priest and Victim, and by dissolving Him into the collective presence of concelebrants.⁴⁹

VI

We have limited ourselves above to a short study of the *Novus Ordo* where it deviates most seriously from the theology of the Catholic Mass. Our observations touch upon deviations which are *typical*. To prepare a complete study of all the pitfalls, dangers and *psychologically and spiritually destructive elements* the new rite contains, whether in texts, rubrics or instructions, would be a vast undertaking.

We have taken no more than a passing glance at the three new Eucharistic Prayers, since they have already come in for repeated and authoritative criticism. The second gave immediate scandal to the faithful due to its brevity.⁵⁰ Of

48. GI §70, DOL 1460 fn.

49. It now seems lawful for priests to receive Communion under both species at a concelebration, even when they are obliged to have celebrated Mass alone before or after concelebrating.

50. It has been presented as "The Canon of Hippolytus," but only a few traces of the text remain.

Eucharistic Prayer II it has well been said that a priest who no longer believed in either transubstantiation or the sacrificial character of the Mass could recite it with perfect tranquility of conscience, and that a Protestant minister, moreover, could use it in his own celebrations just as well.

The new Missal was introduced in Rome as an “abundant resource for pastoral work,” as “a text more pastoral than juridical,” which national bishops’ conferences could adapt, according to circumstances, to the genius of different peoples. Section One of the new Congregation for Divine Worship, moreover, will now be responsible “for the publication and *constant revision* of liturgical books.”

This idea was echoed recently in the official newsletter of the Liturgical Institutes of Germany, Switzerland and Austria:

The Latin texts must now be translated into the languages of different nations. The “Roman style” must be adapted to the individuality of each local Church. That which was conceived in a timeless state must now be transposed into the changing context of concrete situations, and into the constant flux of the universal Church and its myriad congregations.⁵¹

The Apostolic Constitution itself, in promulgating the *Novus Ordo Missae*, deals a death-blow to the Church’s universal language when — contrary to the express wish of the Second Vatican Council — it unequivocally states that “in a

51. *Gottesdienst* no. 9 (14 May 1969).

great diversity of languages, one [?] and the same prayer will ascend, more fragrant than incense.”

The demise of Latin may therefore be taken for granted. Gregorian chant — which Vatican II recognized as a distinctive characteristic of the Roman liturgy, decreeing that it “be given pride of place in liturgical services”⁵² — will logically follow, given, among other things, the freedom of choice permitted in choosing texts for the Introit and the Gradual.

From the outset therefore, the new rite was pluralistic and experimental, bound to time and place. Since unity of worship has been shattered once and for all, what basis will exist for the unity of the faith which accompanied it and which, we were told, was always to be defended without compromise?

It is obvious that the New Order of Mass has no intention of presenting the Faith taught by the Council of Trent. But it is to this Faith that the Catholic conscience is bound forever. Thus, with the promulgation of the New Order of Mass, the true Catholic is faced with a tragic need to choose.

VII

The Apostolic Constitution explicitly mentions the riches of piety and doctrine the *Novus Ordo* supposedly borrows from the Eastern Churches. But the result is so removed from, and indeed opposed to the spirit of, the Eastern liturgies that it can only leave faithful in those rites revolted and

52. SC §116, DOL 116.

horrified.

What do these ecumenical borrowings amount to? Basically, to introducing multiple texts for the Eucharistic Prayer (the *anaphora*) — none of which approach their Eastern counterparts' complexity or beauty — and to permitting Communion under both species and the use of deacons.

Against this, the New Order of Mass appears to have been deliberately shorn of every element where the Roman Liturgy came closest to the Eastern rites.⁵³ At the same time, by abandoning its unmistakable and immemorial Roman character, the *Novus Ordo* casts off what was spiritually precious of its own. In place of this are elements which bring the new rite closer to certain Protestant liturgies, not even those closest to Catholicism. At the same time, these new elements degrade the Roman liturgy and further alienate it

53. Consider the following elements found in the Byzantine rite: lengthy and repeated penitential prayers; solemn vesting rites for the celebrant and deacon; the preparation of the offerings at the *proskomidia*, a complete rite in itself; repeated invocations, even in the prayers of offering, to the Blessed Virgin and the saints; invocations of the choirs of Angels at the Gospel as "invisible concelebrants," while the choir identifies itself with the angelic choirs in the *Cherubicon*; the sanctuary screen (*iconostasis*) separating the sanctuary from the rest of the church and the clergy from the people; the hidden Consecration, symbolizing the divine mystery to which the entire liturgy alludes; the position of the priest who celebrates facing God, and never facing the people; Communion given always and only by the celebrant; the continual marks of adoration toward the sacred species; the essentially contemplative attitude of the people. The fact that these liturgies, even in their less solemn forms, last for over an hour and are constantly defined as "awe-inspiring, unutterable... heavenly, life-giving mysteries" speaks for itself. Finally, we note how in both the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom and the Liturgy of St. Basil, the concept of "supper" or "banquet" appears clearly subordinate to the concept of sacrifice — just it was in the Roman Mass.

from the East, as did the reforms which preceded the *Novus Ordo*.

In compensation, the new liturgy will delight all those groups hovering on the verge of apostasy who, during a spiritual crisis without precedent, now wreak havoc in the Church by poisoning Her organism and by undermining Her unity in doctrine, worship, morals and discipline.

VIII

St. Pius V had the Roman Missal drawn up (as the present Apostolic Constitution now recalls) as an instrument of unity among Catholics. In conformity with the injunctions of the Council of Trent, the Missal was to exclude all dangers, either to liturgical worship or to the faith itself, then threatened by the Protestant Revolt. The grave situation fully justified — and even rendered prophetic — the saintly Pontiff's solemn warning given in 1570 at the end of the Bull promulgating his Missal:

Should anyone presume to lay a hand on this, let him know that he shall incur the wrath of God Almighty and His holy Apostles Peter and Paul.⁵⁴

54. Bull *Quo Primum*, 13 July 1570. In Session 23 (*Decree on the Most Holy Eucharist*), the Council of Trent announced its intention "to uproot completely the cockle of the damnable errors and schism which in these fateful times of ours an enemy has sown (see Mt 13:25) in the teaching of faith about the Holy Eucharist and about the use and worship of the Eucharist. In addition to his other purpose, our Savior left the Eucharist in his Church as a symbol of unity and love which he desired to unify and unite all Christians." DB 873.

When the *Novus Ordo* was presented at the Vatican Press Office, it was impudently asserted that the conditions which prompted the decrees of the Council of Trent no longer exist. Not only do these decrees still apply today, but conditions are now infinitely worse. It was precisely to repel those dangers which in every age threaten the pure deposit of the faith,⁵⁵ that the Church, under divine inspiration, set up dogmatic definitions and doctrinal pronouncements as her defenses. These in turn immediately influenced her worship, which became the most complete monument to her faith. Trying to return this worship to the practices of Christian antiquity and recreating artificially the original spontaneity of ancient times is to engage in that “unhealthy archaeologism” Pius XII so roundly condemned.⁵⁶ It is, moreover, to dismantle all the theological ramparts erected for the

55. “Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding the profane novelties of words.” 1 Tim 6:20.

56. “Assuredly it is a wise and most laudable thing to return in spirit and affection to the sources of the Sacred Liturgy. For research in this field of study, by tracing it back to its origins, contributes valuable assistance towards a more thorough and careful investigation of the significance of feasts, and of the meaning of the texts and sacred ceremonies employed on their occasion. But it is neither wise nor laudable to reduce everything to antiquity by every possible device. Thus, to cite some instances, one would be straying from the right path were he to wish the altar restored to its primitive table form; were he to want black excluded as a color for liturgical vestments; were he to forbid the use of sacred images and statues in Churches; were he to order the crucifix so designed that the Divine Redeemer’s Body shows no trace of His cruel sufferings.... This way of acting bids fair to revive the exaggerated and senseless antiquarianism to which the illegal Synod of Pistoia gave rise. It likewise attempts to reinstate a series of errors which were responsible for the calling of that meeting as well as for those resulting from it, with grievous harm to souls, and which the Church, the ever watchful guardian of the ‘deposit of faith’ committed to her charge by her Divine Founder, had every right and reason to condemn.” *Mediator Dei*, I.5, PTL 548, 549.

protection of the rite and to take away all the beauty which enriched it for centuries.⁵⁷ And all this at one of the most critical moments — if not *the* most critical moment — in the Church's history!

Today, division and schism are officially acknowledged to exist not only outside the Church, but within her as well.⁵⁸ The Church's unity is not only threatened but has already been tragically compromised.⁵⁹ Errors against the Faith are not merely insinuated, but are — as has been likewise acknowledged — now forcibly imposed through liturgical abuses and aberrations.

To abandon a liturgical tradition which for four centuries stood as a sign and pledge of unity in worship,⁶⁰ and to replace it with another liturgy which, due to the countless

57. "Let us not deceive ourselves with the suggestion that the Church, which has become great and majestic for the glory of God as a magnificent temple of His, must be brought back to its original and smallest proportions, as though they were the only true ones, the only good ones." Paul VI, Encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*, 6 August 1964.

58. "A practically schismatic ferment divides, subdivides, splits the Church." Paul VI, Homily *In Coena Domini*, 3 April 1969.

59. "There are also among us those 'schisms' and 'separations' which St. Paul sadly denounces in I Corinthians." Paul VI, *ibid.*

60. It is well-known how Vatican II is now being repudiated by the very men who once gloried in being its leaders. While the Pope declared at the Council's end that it had changed nothing, these men came away determined to "explode" the Council's teaching in the process of actually applying it. Unfortunately the Holy See, with inexplicable haste, approved and even seemingly encouraged through *Consilium* an ever-increasing infidelity to the Council. This infidelity went from changes in mere form (Latin, Gregorian Chant, suppression of ancient rites, etc.) all the way to the changes in substance which the *Novus Ordo* sanctions. To the disastrous consequences we have attempted to point out here, we must add those which, with an even greater effect psychologically, will affect the Church's discipline and teaching authority by undermining the respect and docility owed the Holy See.

liberties it authorizes, cannot but be a sign of division — a liturgy which teems with insinuations or manifest errors against the integrity of the Catholic Faith — is, we feel bound in conscience to proclaim, an incalculable error.

Corpus Domini

5 June 1969

Technical Notes



on the Translation

The most widely distributed English translation of *The Ottaviani Intervention* was a version prepared in Great Britain by the Lumen Gentium Foundation and first published in the early 1970s. (I have been unable to discover the publication date.) It has been reprinted from time to time in various traditionalist publications, although it is not, insofar as I know, readily available from any publisher in the United States.

The typical layman, I think, found the Lumen Gentium translation rather difficult to understand. Many quotes were left in Latin, numerous technical terms went unexplained, certain passages were needlessly elliptical, and the style was somewhat obscure and foreign-sounding.

To overcome these difficulties, I tried to produce a new translation which would (1) accurately express the sense of the original, (2) conform to accepted standards for good, clear English, and (3) be more comprehensible for the average reader. The following points will indicate how I attempted to achieve those aims:

Original Texts. The Italian text for the letter of the two cardinals is that of the autograph reproduced in Emilio Cavaterra, *Il Prefetto del Sant' Offizio*, (Milan: Mursia 1990), 190–1. For the *Short Critical Study*, I employed the 1983 edition of the Italian text (Editions Sainte Jeanne d'Arc, Vailly-sur-Sauldre, France) as my base text. This I compared with the 1983 French translation prepared by Father Guérard des Lauriers and reviewed by Madame Guerrini, both of whom worked on producing the Italian text which Cardinal

Ottaviani sent to Paul VI in 1969. Their French translation clarified some points in the Italian text that seemed obscure.

Latin Terms. All Latin terms and phrases left untranslated in the Italian and French editions have been translated into English.

Quotes from Other Sources. Where the *Intervention* quotes from other sources such as the General Instruction, the Order of Mass, or papal pronouncements, I employed already-existing English translations for these quotes. Where the *Intervention* quotes from the new Order of the Mass itself, I employed the familiar ICEL translation, except when the *Intervention* comments on a term which does not appear in the ICEL translation.

In-Text References. In-text references to paragraphs in the General Instruction and to other documents have been placed in footnotes. Wherever possible, I included references to readily-available English translations.

English Style. I attempted to adhere to the principles of good style for written English. Where I could do so and still remain faithful to the sense of the original, I therefore sought to avoid passive constructions, overly-long sentences, weak verbs, nominalizations, impersonal verbs, obscure pronoun references, and other characteristics of bad English style.

Restored Texts. The Lumen Gentium translation of the Italian unaccountably left out three sentences from the *Study* (see the 1983 edition, 55: “E un noto periodico...”) and one word from the cardinals’ letter (see Cavaterra, 190, paragraph 2: “gruppo di *vescovi*, teologi...”). These have been restored.

Technical Terms. The *Intervention* contains a number of liturgical and theological terms whose meanings are not immediately apparent to the average reader. Merely translating these terms without explanation would have rendered sections of the *Intervention* incomprehensible. On the other hand, a separate glossary would have forced the reader to turn pages every time he encountered an unfamiliar term, while adding more footnotes would have resulted in an unwieldy number of notes for a short text. The solution was to employ an occasional parenthetical or appositive phrase to clarify a technical term, e.g., *epiclesi* I rendered as: “invocation of the Holy Ghost in the Eucharistic Prayer (epiclesis). . .” Father Guérard used a similar method in his 1969 and 1983 French translations, e.g., *Finalità immanente* he rendered in French as: “Finalité immanente. La finalité immanente de la Messe est primordialement un Sacrifice.”

Subheadings & Paragraphing. In most cases I employed the subheadings and paragraphing of Father Guérard’s French translation.

— Rev. Anthony Cekada

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Rev. Anthony Cekada was ordained to the priesthood in 1977 by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre. He offers the traditional Latin Mass in the greater Cincinnati area and teaches liturgy and canon law at Most Holy Trinity Seminary in Brooksville, Florida. He is the author of *Work of Human Hands: A Theological Critique of the Mass of Paul VI*, an exhaustive study of the New Mass.

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