

Pontifical University of Saint Thomas in Rome
Faculty of Theology

ECCLESIA DEI ADFLICTA

**Towards a Deepened Understanding
of the
Liturgical Value
of the
Motu Proprio of 2 July 1988**

Tesina submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a
License in Sacred Theology
with a specialization in Spiritual Theology

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January 22, 1999
Rome

**The only way to make Vatican II credible is to present it clearly as what it is:
part of the whole single Tradition of the Church and its faith.¹**

¹ Joseph Ratzinger, “Speech to the Bishops of Chile”, 11, delivered 13 July 1988 in the aftermath of the 30 June 1988 schism; in *Canonical Proposal of the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Peter* (Scranton: Privately published, 14 September 1993), 61-64. [Cf. Appendix]

Table of Contents

I.	INTRODUCTION	4
II.	BACKGROUND TO THE QUESTION	7
	A. Principles from the Council	7
	B. The Nature of Liturgy	15
	C. After the Council	36
III.	THE MOTU PROPRIO <i>ECCLESIA DEI ADFLICTA</i>	76
	A. 1988 Schism of Archbishop Lefebvre	76
	B. Pope John Paul II's Pastoral Measure	81
	C. Lasting Effects of the Motu Proprio	92
IV.	CONCLUSION	95
APPENDICES:		
	Letter from the CDW: <i>Quattuor Abhinc Annos</i>	96
	John Paul II: Motu Proprio <i>Ecclesia Dei Adflicta</i>	97
	Cardinal Ratzinger: "Speech to the Bishops of Chile"	100
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	104

I. INTRODUCTION

It is the intention of this paper to examine some of the central causes and circumstances operative in the schism of June 30, 1988, which derived in considerable measure from the complexity of changes that occurred in the liturgy of the Roman Rite. That the whole fabric of circumstances leading to this break was and still remains complex (for it encompasses issues extending beyond the liturgy itself), the possibility of an in-depth analysis of their every aspect must be excluded from the scope of this study. The present purpose is to shed light on the whole complex problem by citing and analyzing various sources. These indicate that the crisis was aggravated by a breach between the intentions of the Council Fathers and what actually happened to the liturgy of the Roman Rite after the Council ended. The second part of the paper outlines concrete measures initiated by Pope John Paul's Motu Proprio *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta* that readmitted the older liturgical order of the Roman Rite as an indult, and some results of this initiative.

What is undertaken in the first part of the study is a dispassionate exposition of facts and persons' points of view in the complexities under consideration. The intention is to describe *that* something happened, and not systematically analyze *why* anyone may feel this or that person said or did the things that have happened. When reasons *are* given they are not personal judgments made of others by the present author, but publicly stated positions offered by individuals explaining actions they themselves have been involved in or analyses of certain facts undertaken by public persons of authority or expertise. *Absence of moral judgment* regarding attachment to liturgical forms is particularly central to understanding Pope John Paul's pastoral action in his *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta* by which the classical Roman liturgy has been granted a canonical framework for free use within the Roman Church.

It is not the scope of this paper to analyze in depth the scholarship represented by the liturgical changes nor every aspect of the Council's vision for reform. The present effort limits itself to the fundamental principles established by the Council for reforming the liturgy, whether and how these principles have been observed or not, and some of the results that followed. In this process examining the nature of liturgy itself is necessary along with its antecedent principles of a Christian anthropology.

In regard to specific human actions the various observations are not to be understood as universally applicable in every instance, and certainly do not reflect the good will of many in the Church who have been involved in the same problems but with different manners of response.

It is certain that the liturgical problem continues in the Church today thus transcending the 1988 crisis. For this reason it is difficult to simply place the analysis in past tense when describing factors operative in the schism. Many of the elements have not changed significantly and continue to be operative well after the measures initiated by *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta* were put into place.

While the discussion of background causes and effects that lead toward the schism provide understanding for its dynamic, it was in view of alleviating the fundamental aggravation that prompted the Pope in his *Motu Proprio*. That was the absence of free access to the Church's classical Latin liturgy in view of the sizable number of Catholics throughout the world unwilling to abandon it. The Pope provided a pastoral solution rooted in the Council's own teaching and the Church's historical precedent in similar cases. This allowed (and continues to allow) a practical framework that can alleviate the crisis for those it concerns without undermining the principle of authentic liturgical reform (which no one would wish to do) and without unleashing more unrest over the complicated issue of what has actually taken place in the Roman Liturgy since the Council ended (as, equally, no one would wish to do).

From the measures initiated and their development in the growing use of the *Vetus Ordo Romanus* it is clear that there is an objective value to the classical Latin expression of worship operative in the life of the Church today. Man's highest act is the contemplation of God and this occurs most intimately in the Church's worship. Since rational creatures can only approach God through the avenues He has established, their movement towards Him must take place through the created order. Every intrinsically good avenue to God should be understood therefore according to its capacity for advancing persons toward their eternal salvation. It is in this light that the old liturgical order should be approached, and not according to an ideology or polemic that the Pope's pastoral action has sought to obviate.

Since the old liturgical order was used by the Church for centuries, its objective value in Christian life can not be rationally impugned. Instead, according to the Pope's express will the *Vetus Ordo* should be understood as part of the Church's treasure, and rightly approached in the manner with which it has been given once again.

The present study seeks to integrate an understanding for the old order of the Roman Rite within the Church of today. It seeks to analyze not only the circumstances which have led to its use again, but to approach its understanding in view of a Church often beset in its effective mission to the modern world at large. It is in view of the re-evangelization of a humanity that has distanced itself increasingly from God that this pastoral measure has its role to play. With the pervasive problems regarding liturgy that transcend the limited scope of the 1988 schism, the *Vetus Ordo Romanus* emerges as an effective means for promoting Catholic faith and order for the many persons who are drawn to it. In it are to be found the solid elements of a Catholic liturgical worship: theocentric, transcendental, doctrinal and mystical. As such it provides an effective avenue towards the God of salvation, font of revelation and source of true spirituality.

In the years following the Council any discussion not embracing the liturgical changes with enthusiasm – even discussion which has been objective and non-polemic – had been deemed by some as unacceptable. Discussion of the *old* liturgy or suggestion that it might have perennial value had been dismissed outright. In the more recent years following *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta* one is led to believe that such a negative approach to the subject is thankfully passing. Only by forthright discussion can a more productive atmosphere emerge for the good of the Church as a whole. In this manner fundamental issues regarding the whole of the liturgical problem can be more honestly examined and the fruit of an honest inquiry may come forth. It is hoped that the present study will contribute not only to a deepened understanding of the Motu Proprio *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta* but in a modest way contribute to a deeper appreciation of the Church's riches in her liturgical heritage. If that is the case then this paper can make some small contribution to rebuilding the Church's "liturgical consciousness", something Cardinal Ratzinger insists is so necessary for bringing to fruition the Council's authentic intentions and true development in Catholic tradition.

II. BACKGROUND TO THE QUESTION

A. Principles from the Council

It is not an exaggeration to say that many Catholics have been deeply disturbed at what has happened to the fabric of the Church and its daily life since the close of the Second Vatican Council. They have lived through many changes, adapting to each under the assurance that it is a product of “Vatican II”. In recent years “Vatican II” has been increasingly replaced by the expression, “the spirit of Vatican II”² and in the end there has developed a seemingly endless ongoing process of change. In the eyes of many this continuum has taken on a life of its own, in many areas increasingly distancing itself from the authentic mind of the Church. This has certainly contributed to the reality described by Cardinal Ratzinger when he remarked,

...in the Catholic Church herself there are, in fact, very deep ruptures, so much so that one sometimes really has the feeling that two Churches are living side by side...³

This process of change has touched every dimension of Church life. The faithful have been urged to cooperate not only with what has been legitimate and salutary, but in many instances with what has not as well. In many instances where they have objected legitimately to aberrations obedience has been urged under pain of being “divisive” or “against the Council”, even when loyalty to the Church and the Council have in no way been in question.

In its Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Second Vatican Council stated, “Holy Mother Church desires to undertake with great care a general restoration of the liturgy itself”⁴ and that, “in this restoration both texts and rites should be drawn up so as to

² Cf. Joseph Ratzinger, *The Ratzinger Report: An Exclusive Interview on the State of the Church*, trans. Salvatore Attanasio and Graham Harrison (Leominster: Fowler Wright Books, Ltd., 1985), 34. “Continuing his diagnosis, he recalls that this “true” Council, “already during its sessions and then increasingly in the subsequent period, was opposed by a self-styled ‘spirit of the Council’, which in reality is a true ‘anti-spirit’ of the Council. According to this pernicious anti-spirit, everything that is ‘new’ (or presumed such: how many old heresies have surfaced again in recent years that have been presented as something new!) is always and in every case better than what has been or what is. It is the anti-spirit according to which the history of the Church would first begin with Vatican II, viewed as a kind of point zero.”

³ Joseph Ratzinger, *Salt of the Earth: Christianity and the Catholic Church at the End of the Millennium*, trans. Adrian Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997), 243.

⁴ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 21, in Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1992).

express more clearly the holy things they signify.”⁵

This seminal document on liturgical reform carries an introduction which states at once that the Council’s purpose was to “impart an ever-increasing vigor to the Christian life of the faithful”⁶ and that in the intended restoration of the rites,

...in faithful obedience to tradition, the Sacred Council declares that Holy Mother Church holds all lawfully recognized rites to be of equal right and dignity; that she wishes to preserve them in the future and foster them in every way...⁷

In consideration of the actual process which overtook the liturgy of the Roman Rite and its effect on the vigor of Christian life within the Church, it is important to consider another conciliar document that addressed liturgical reform. In *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* the Council’s concern for all the different Catholic Rites was further developed. This later document also contains the principle of *preserve* and *foster* in calling for an authentic restoration of the Eastern rites. While this document specifically addressed the Eastern Catholic Churches and their particular patrimonies, in reality *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* is the culmination of the Catholic Church’s constant teaching on the preservation and fostering of every specific liturgical tradition and ritual identity by which the faithful, grouped into particular Churches, come to know and love God, are sanctified by the same Sacraments and united to the whole of the Catholic Church under her one hierarchy.

Despite its large size the Roman Rite certainly constitutes a particular Church, and encompasses a specific group of people within the Catholic Church as a whole. This particular Church, large and varied as it is, nonetheless possessed on the eve of the Council a very specific ritual identity with an immensely rich and highly developed liturgical culture and spirituality. It was certainly the whole of this cultural/liturgical identity, that is the historical Roman Rite with its unique and diversified liturgical heritage, that the Council Fathers wished renovated by an authentic restoration of its ancient liturgical traditions. It is also very clear that the Church wished to preserve the identity of this heritage while recognizing that it was equal in right and dignity with all others.

In *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* the Council called the various Eastern Churches to protect, purify and love more deeply the spiritual heritage and liturgical rites peculiar to each. The Council clearly articulates that variety in ritual expression, “far from diminishing the Church’s unity, rather

⁵ SC, 21.

⁶ SC, 1.

serves to emphasize it”.⁸ This is a most important point because, in light of the actual developments that overtook the Roman liturgy, many have claimed since the Motu Proprio *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta* that variation in ritual expression is divisive to Church unity. As the Council itself points out the fact is to the contrary. Far from being a danger or source of division, liturgical variation is an overt expression of the Church’s transcendence of the limitations of cultural differences. In a word, ritual variety actually demonstrates the Church’s *catholicity*.

In *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* the Council calls upon the Eastern Churches to,

...aim always at a more perfect knowledge and practice of their rites, and if they have fallen away due to circumstances of times or persons, they are to strive for a return to their ancestral traditions.⁹

Since the directives concerning the liturgical restoration for the Eastern Churches are based on the general principles of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, it would be difficult to exempt *Orientalium*’s exhortation to gain “a more perfect knowledge and practice of its rites” from application to the clergy and faithful of the Roman Rite regarding their own liturgical heritage and identity. It would be unreasonable to think that the Church as a whole or the Roman Rite *in specie* could be served by people who were ignorant of its history, content and immense treasure of faith, theology, spirituality and culture. Even less useful would be priests and bishops who themselves did not possess “a more perfect knowledge and practice” of their own rite. The crisis which the liturgical upheaval in the West has precipitated would have been averted had the restoration of the Roman liturgy taken the course laid down by the Council Fathers. This would have been helped immeasurably had the laity and hierarchy of the Roman Rite been truly informed with “a more perfect knowledge and practice” regarding the full compass of their liturgical culture and then acted in conformity with its inner principles and spiritual dynamic.

Members of the Roman Rite would not be reading *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* incorrectly were they to understand that the principles contained in this thought:

...members of the Eastern Churches should be firmly convinced that they can and ought always preserve their own legitimate liturgical rites and ways of life, and that changes are to

⁷ SC, 4.

⁸ *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, 2, in Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*.

⁹ OE, 6.

be introduced only to forward their own organic development...¹⁰

as applicable directly to themselves and the restoration and preservation of their legitimate liturgical rites and ways of life. Indeed, since the Fathers stated that,

...this Council solemnly declares that the Churches of the East *like those of the West* have the right and duty to govern themselves *according to their own special disciplines*. *For these are guaranteed by ancient traditions...*¹¹ [emphasis added]

it is difficult to conceive how the liturgical principles applied to the Eastern Churches do not also apply to the principal Church of the West. In fact they *do* apply since this document states what was presumed by all the Fathers of the Council when they drafted the introduction and text of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. It expresses their will regarding liturgical restoration in the Church as a whole. East and West alike possess specific liturgical, ecclesial cultures; these were (and still are) to be thoroughly understood, fostered, preserved and restored. As to actual changes *Sacrosanctum Concilium* states,

...there must be no innovations unless the good of the Church genuinely and certainly requires them, and care must be taken that any new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already existing.¹²

This capital principle is maintained in *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*:

...changes are to be introduced only to forward their own organic development. They [the authorities of the Eastern Churches] are to carry out all these prescriptions with the greatest fidelity.¹³

It is in this vein then that the Council Fathers assert,

All members of the Eastern Churches should be firmly convinced that they can and ought always to preserve their own legitimate liturgical rites and ways of life, and that changes are to be introduced only to forward their own organic development.¹⁴

Clearly there is no indication that members of the Latin Church ought *not* “always to preserve their own legitimate liturgical rites and way of life”. It should be noted that several of the Eastern Churches have been carrying out this mandate for an authentic restoration of their liturgical

¹⁰ *OE*, 6.

¹¹ *OE*, 5.

¹² *SC*, 23.

¹³ *OE*, 6.

¹⁴ *OE*, 6.

heritage as was actually intended by the Council. As an example, the Byzantine Ukrainian Catholic Church in America has seriously undertaken the purification of its rites from the encroachment of “Latinization”. It has done so by actually returning to its “ancestral traditions” as found in their own authentic liturgical sources; this is directly evident in the widespread restoration of its proper rites and religio-cultural art forms. That the Ukrainian Catholic Church has done so by using the very principles laid down by the Council for the *whole of the Church* – and with vastly different results than what has obtained in the Roman Church – demonstrates that the Council when applied correctly can not have intended what overtook the liturgy in the West. In view of this departure from the Council’s intention it is not surprising that in the public worship of the Roman Rite the liturgy became the focal point for the crisis that eventually drew forth the *Motu Proprio Ecclesia Dei Adflicta*.

The Council’s desire expressed in *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* is universal: it is a call to hierarchy and laity alike to love the liturgical patrimonies they have received from their ancestors by striving to know and understand more deeply what they contain. In *Sacrosanctum Concilium*’s sections on liturgical music and *Optatam Totius*’ chapter on the revision of ecclesiastical studies for seminarians, there is a common insistence on more adequate seminary training for future priests. They must know the liturgical language of their different rites as well as receive authentic formations in the music and other religio-cultural elements employed in their respective forms of worship.

Every rite is made up of an ensemble of outward forms which manifest the substantive, doctrinal core of revelation enshrined within their living and proper sacramental expression. Each has developed historically in a slow and homogenous manner across the centuries. They have developed at different paces and under different influences, but, from a dogmatic point of view, they are identical. Be that as it may, they exhibit a large variety in outward expression dependent largely on the human contribution of their cultural matrices. In a word, they are complexes of material forms and expressions in which the *written text* is but a single – and not exhaustive – element.

Generally speaking these forms do not, each and every one, touch directly on essential Catholic faith or morals. But there has spread among many in the Church today a misconception

born of years of wholesale change in liturgical expression. The ambiance of constant change has caused a serious decay in that which historically has understood and venerated *the sanctity of liturgical forms themselves as important parts of the fabric of Catholic tradition received from God*. As such these outward forms exercise a deep influence on the religious experience and formation of those who live them. They are the milieu in which the sacramental realities they contain are effected. Forms in worship are less and less respected in the West because they are viewed less and less *liturgically* and more and more simply in regard to *validity* or *law*. An amusing but true assessment of their appreciation is articulated by the Benedictine liturgist Fr. Aidan Kavanagh when speaking of “sacramental discourse” or the public worship of the Church:

We generally think of the two sorts of discourses the other way around, theology coming first and sacramental discourse very much later as a possible excursus off the former. Sacramental discourse in fact is often thought of as theological adiaphora best practiced by those with a taste for banners, ceremonial, and arts and crafts. It is regarded as an academically less than disciplined swamp in which Anglican high churchmen, Orthodox Bishops, and many... Roman Catholics are hopelessly mired.¹⁵

Many consider certain material elements of the liturgy as “not essential” – not essential for “validly confecting a sacrament” and therefore, by implication, not important, even a hindrance. In many cases forms and matters of ceremonial are seen increasingly as “accretions” – degradations or useless developments on what is thought of as “earlier”, “better” or more “authentic”, or simply dismissed as “pointless repetitions”, “wearisome externals.” In fact they are the flesh of liturgical action, the visitation of God Himself being its bones.

This approach to outward forms was sharply criticized by an Italian bishop Domenico Celada. In an article in *Lo Specchio* on May 16, 1969, he expressed very frank views concerning the practical application of such concepts to the reforms already well underway:

The gradual destruction of the liturgy is a sad fact already well known. Within less than five years, the thousand year old structure of divine worship which throughout the centuries has been known as the *Opus Dei* has been dismantled. The beginning was the abolition of Latin, perpetuated in a fraudulent manner... We have seen, during these past years, the abolition of those sublime gestures of devotion and piety such as signs of the cross, kissing of the altar which symbolizes Christ, genuflections, etc., gestures which the secretary of the Commission responsible for liturgical reform, Fr. Annibale Bugnini, has dared publicly to describe as ‘anachronisms’ and ‘wearisome externals’. Instead a puerile form of rite has

¹⁵ Kavanagh, Aidan, *On Liturgical Theology* (New York: Pueblo Publishing, 1984), 46.

been imposed, noisy, uncouth and extremely boring. And hypocritically, no notice has been taken of the disturbance and disgust of the faithful... Resounding success has been claimed for it because a portion of the faithful have been trained to repeat mechanically a succession of phrases which through repetition have already lost their effect. We have witnessed with horror the introduction into our churches of hideous parodies of the sacred texts, of tunes and instruments more suited to the tavern.¹⁶

This attitude towards received forms of worship is an unfortunate example of the degradation of liturgical consciousness in the West that Cardinal Ratzinger says needs changing. It is an ignorance regarding fundamental liturgical principles, shows a lack of respect for received patrimonies, and rains havoc on the liturgy when applied. This in turn can not but affect the Christian life of believers in a negative way. This attitude is indicative of an even deeper malaise in Christianity today.

There is a lack of *humility towards the sources* on which faith and worship themselves depend and this is evident in many. Furthermore, there is a significant loss of understanding regarding the fundamental relationship of tradition to all dimensions of the faith. This double problem underlies the 1988 schism and is present in many of the problems which beset the Church even now. It is especially operative in the problem of the liturgical reforms.

The only valid approach to God (and therefore the only valid approach to the channels leading to God) is to recognize the primacy of *truth* and its relationship to personal *freedom* in its pursuit. This primacy requires what Cardinal Ratzinger calls the “asceticism of truth”.¹⁷ It is the *disciplined self-control of humility before the fact* that will allow the higher sources of God, revelation, liturgy, Scripture, Magisterium and other vehicles of tradition their preeminence. In the ascetic pursuit of truth, will and reason bend to the sources’ *information*: that is to say, through humility one *receives* what the sources *impose*. The Cardinal observes,

The lack of truth is the major disease of our age. ...The pain of truth...has to be accepted day in and day out. Only in truth’s humble patience do we mature from the inside and

¹⁶ Celada, Domenico, “La mini-messe contro il dogma”, *Lo Specchio*, 16 May 1969, quoted by Annibale Bugnini in *The Reform of the Liturgy 1948-1975*, trans. Matthew J. O’Connell (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1990), 289.

¹⁷ Ratzinger, Joseph, *A New Song for the Lord: Faith in Christ and Liturgy Today*, trans. Martha Matesich (New York: Crossroad, 1996), 10. “We will have to listen to the sources which, by bearing witness to the origin correct our present age when it gets lost in its own fantasies. This humble submission to the word of the sources, this willingness to let our dreams be snatched away from us and obey reality is a basic condition for true encounter. Encounter requires the asceticism of truth, the humility of hearing and seeing which leads to the authentic grasping of the truth.”

become free from ourselves and for God.¹⁸

Christ Who Christians profess to be the Way, the Truth and the Life calls us to an imitation of Himself. According to Cardinal Ratzinger this call is “concerned not simply with a human agenda or with the human virtues of Jesus, but with His *entire way*.”¹⁹ [emphasis in original]

Following the *entire way* of Christ is to actively imitate the entirety of His life and being. This is the response of *martyrdom’s devotion* and requires an all embracing *askesis* (self-discipline) in regard to Christ and truth. It yields an *obedience* born of grace and nascent Christian charity, the underlying mortification in receiving Baptism, and the conscious program of living out the *Christ-event*. By embracing this humility in seeking truth, the Christian is able to embrace an *authentic* understanding of his relationship to the sources of religion, and by implication, the ontological antecedents to public worship.

The various elements of worship are part of a received ecclesial *traditio*; they are part of a *received* fabric which derives from God and not merely from the accidents of a disembodied human history. As such these traditions are sources before which humble Christian intellects must bow in order to understand the truths they contain. Part of that truth is how these function within the fabric of the authentic Christian life.

This is what motivated Pope Pius XII to issue his encyclical *Mediator Dei*. As an illustration of *misunderstanding* received liturgical traditions (i.e. an error in perceiving the *truth* of a *source*) the current and ubiquitous liturgical concept that “earlier is better” was already condemned in 1947 as *antiquarianism*:

The same reasoning holds in the case of some persons who are bent on the restoration of all the ancient rites and ceremonies indiscriminately. The liturgy of the early ages is most certainly worthy of all veneration. But ancient usage must not be esteemed more suitable and proper, either in its own right or in its significance for later times and new situations, on the simple ground that it carries the savor and aroma of antiquity. *The more recent liturgical rites likewise deserve reverence and respect. They, too, owe their inspiration to the Holy Spirit, who assists the Church in every age even to the consummation of the world. They are equally the resources used by the majestic Spouse of Jesus Christ to promote and procure the sanctity of man.*²⁰ [emphasis added]

¹⁸ Ibid., 166.

¹⁹ Ibid., 19.

²⁰ Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*, 61, 23 November 1947, in Claudia Carlen, ed., *Papal Encyclicals* (Raleigh:

In this papal teaching we have a clear indication that the historical development of liturgical rites is not simply a human process of accretion, but that it originates in the Holy Spirit. It is therefore something *given* by God and *received* by man. As such not only its reception requires the “asceticism of truth”, its underlying comprehension requires the virtue of intellectual humility to even approach the fabric of what is involved in this context.

Liturgy develops not by the work of experts and jurists but by the influence of God’s grace in the history and cultural development of the Catholic Church within the ongoing context of her living experience. As a direct implication the rites and ceremonies which have grown up in the Church *deserve respect* because of their origin and because God uses them to sanctify His people. In a word the liturgical rites are themselves *holy*. The Eastern Orthodox hold strongly to this traditional reverence of liturgical forms and are critical of the recent trend to the contrary in the Catholic Church.²¹

To better understand the aggravating causes behind the 1988 schism it is necessary to examine more closely what liturgy is and how the fabric of its enactment bears upon its true effect. While operative in the 1988 crisis, these factors transcend that event. They are significant to the great problems still present in public worship and as such effect the Church’s work and witness.

B. The Nature of *Liturgy*

Liturgy presupposes man within the Christian understanding of creation. He has a purpose and he has a context. In this regard man, created by God, is intrinsically ordered towards Him. Because he is rational unlike the other animals in creation, he *alone* can bless God for all that he has received from Him. Man in the very ground of his being has been created to *adore God*. It is an act that is *due* in him since in nature *omnis agens agit propter finem* – all things tend toward that end to which the creative act of God has ordered them. According to Fr. Alexander Schmemmann man alone,

McGrath, 1981) Vol. 4.

²¹ A very indicative discussion on this subject may be found in Benjamin D. Williams’ book, *Orthodox Worship: A Living Continuity With the Synagogue, the Temple and the Early Church* (Minneapolis: Light and Life Publishing Co., 1990), 206.

...is to respond to God's blessing with his blessing. ...in the Bible to bless God is not a "religious" or "cultic" act, but the very way of life. ...All rational, spiritual and other qualities of man, distinguishing him from other creatures, have their focus and ultimate fulfillment in this capacity to bless God, to know, so to speak, the meaning of the thirst and hunger that constitutes his life. "*Homo sapiens*", "*homo faber*"...yes, but first of all, "*homo adorans*". The first and basic definition of man is that he is the priest. He stands at the center of the world and unifies it in his act of blessing God, of both receiving the world from God and offering it to God..."²² [emphasis in original]

As such man has a specific role in the cosmos and in the earthly city of his human existence. He is to adore God in his very being (*homo adorans*) and in his actions (*homo faber*); when he does so he is reflecting wisdom or imitating the divine (*homo sapiens*). His adoration is one that *refracts* the light which is Christ throughout the whole universe. This is brought about formally and publicly by means of the Church's central act of life: *public liturgical service to God*.

This understanding of man and his relation to the cosmos is something that has become alien to Christians in the modern era with its post-Enlightenment emphasis on rationality. The roots of Christian worship are found in the ancient world where sensitivity towards the spiritual was far more operative than it is today. For this reason the underpinnings of the cultic act were more fundamentally integrated into the fabric of daily human experience. People were more aware of the spiritual in regard to the material and the relationship of mystery to the whole. The Benedictine liturgical scholar Dom Odo Casel observes in his classic work *The Mystery of Christian Worship*,

Ancient thought, considered as a whole, had a great reverence for all being: the individual felt himself to be a member of the great cosmos, and willingly submitted to its order. The self-seeker [what modern man so often views himself as being] was taken for a rebel: his deed...brought down the anger of the gods. Behind the visible world the deep insight of ancient man saw a higher kingdom of spirit and godhead, of which the things we see are symbol, reflected reality, and at the same time mediators and bearers of spiritual things. Ancient thinking was at once concrete, because concerned with objects, and spiritual, because these [men] did not remain confined to material objects. To men like these it did not seem difficult to believe that God could communicate his life through symbols, or that their own religious acts could leap up into the circle of God's life; it was no different whether they conceived these things as more cosmic or more spiritual; in either case it was a symbolic action which rose to the height of the god's mode of living. The symbolic, strength-giving rites of the mysteries were *real* for the ancients; *when the Church of Christ entered the world she did not end but rather fulfilled their way of thinking*.²³ [emphasis

²² Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World* (Crestwood: Saint Vladimir Seminary Press, 1988), 15.

²³ Odo Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, ed. Burkhard Neunheuser (London: Newman Press, 1932),

added]

The erosion of this manner of perceiving matter and spirit is in great part the result of the triumph of empirical “science” that determines as “real” only what is directly measurable. The sacramental dimension of Christianity has become incomprehensible to modern rationalists. Given the universal context of rationalism, the notion of symbolic worship as a *real* integration of matter and spirit has become equally incomprehensible. Christians have certainly fallen under a rationalist influence and so some fundamental underpinnings operative in worship have been obscured, if not lost altogether. Yet the integration of matter and spirit is precisely what sacramental – liturgical – worship is all about.

In a recent article in *Diakonia*, Professor David Fagerberg speaks about the nature of liturgy:

Ancient Christians borrowed a word from their secular world to describe the work they did when they gathered in Christ...*Leitourgia* meant a kind of public service, in such a way that paying taxes was one's *leitourgia* to the city. It meant the work of a few on behalf of the many. ...The work (*ergia*) of the people of God (*laos*) is Christ's own work perpetuated in history...²⁴

This work of worship as a kind of “tax” due to God derives from the deeper force of the recreation effected by Christ and its impact on human life, society and the entire cosmic order. If man is constituted *homo adorans*, it is by virtue of Baptism that each Christian becomes a *liturgist* or willing “tax payer” to the true God in Christ. Professor Fagerberg continues in his article:

Liturgy...is the synergistic work of a deified people, a race grafted by the filial paschal mystery into eighth day existence. The primary agenda of liturgy is the creation of a new heaven and a new earth, not a rite or a new altar cloth. Like a needle pulling thread through fabric to stitch up a rent cloth, the liturgist moves in and out, in and out between earth and heaven, time and eternity, the profane and the sacred, plunging into one and then the other and drawing them together by the thread of his...life.²⁵

²⁴ David Fagerberg, “A Century on Liturgical Asceticism”, *Diakonia*, Vol. 31., No. 1, 1998, 37.

²⁵ Ibidem. Professor Fagerberg's point about liturgy passing the needle between heaven and earth is deeply indicative of the major function of language and ceremony in liturgical worship. In a recent interview in *Latin Mass: Chronicle of a Catholic Reform* (vol. 7, no. 4, Fall 1998, 45), Dr. Catherine Pickstock, an Anglican who recently completed her doctoral dissertation on the “liturgical consummation of philosophy,” made the following response to a question concerning language alteration and its consequence in the new Roman rite of Mass: “The contemporary language forms in the new Mass depict time as a linear succession of discrete present moments, and the self as enclosed and in command of his actions and all that he surveys (not least the task of proceeding to the altar.) In relation to the divine, the self is portrayed as purely passive. This contrasts with the complex temporal repetitions and figurae of the

The question concerning outward *forms* which so preoccupies the liturgical climate in the Church today subsists by necessity in a reality far deeper than that touched upon by the more superficial matters of space, language, and décor as the professor goes on to say.

You can't taste your tongue. Why not? Because it is the organ by which you taste other things. You can't celebrate liturgy. Why not? Because it is the organ by which we celebrate the Kingdom of God. Liturgical time, then, is only partially understood by an anthropological study of human festival, because festival is how the eighth day is celebrated. Liturgical space, then, is not first a history of architecture, it is the nine square yards before the burning bush...²⁶

Liturgy is the *organ* by which the Christian, within the context of the life of the Church itself, celebrates and encounters the Thrice Holy God of all creation, the God he has been created to adore. Liturgy is to touch the Eighth Day, the restoration of the cosmological order in Christ. It is the foretaste of the *eschaton* wherein the City of God absorbs without annihilating the City of Man in the perfection of God's glory in the here and now. Liturgy is to stand in the forecourt of heaven touched by the radiant glory of the angels. Liturgy is the shattering cosmological encounter between the Triune God and man: the former descends to man in the power of the burning bush, the latter is brought into the presence of the Divine by the power that burns the bush while preventing its very annihilation. Liturgy is the arena in which the present world, rent by sin, is re sewn into the fabric of glory. Liturgy is an earthly imitation of the service of praise given by the angels. It is in short our means to a "*participatio Dei*"²⁷, the source of true human life and freedom.

When understood in this manner, it becomes considerably clearer that liturgy is an organ or instrument by which something other than itself takes place. As empirical evidence clearly

medieval liturgy which seem mysteriously to outwit the dichotomy of active and passive. In the old Mass, it becomes unclear what is our own "initiative" and what is the mediation of divine by human action. For this reason, the medieval liturgy conveys the crossing over of eternity and time (as Kierkegaard says, "eternity is the true repetition"). But its constant repetitions and strange digressions present this liturgical "crossing over" as a supremely difficult task for the worshipper to encompass. One might say that this task is cast in the mysterious "middle voice" between Heaven and earth. Of course the [contemporary] liturgical movement [in the Catholic Church] certainly had no intention to silence that voice but that was the unfortunate result of their attempt to inculturate the liturgy into forms of contemporary thought and language." According to Dr. Pickstock one of the "unfortunate results" of the actual changes in the Roman Mass is that what Fagerberg's "passage of the needle" is describing, the mystical interweaving of heaven and earth, has been largely obliterated by the transformation of liturgical texts into "forms of contemporary thought and language". This passing of the needle, this obscure "middle voice" between Heaven and earth, is precisely what worship is supposed to effect. It is the principle function of the *liturgical instrument*.

²⁶ Ibid., 37.

²⁷ Joseph Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 70.

demonstrates, the destruction of an organ's integrity – the disjoining of its component parts – leads to the failure of its function. If liturgy is the organ *by which* the Kingdom comes upon us in specific ways, what must *necessarily* happen should the organ be dismantled and then reconstructed with some of its parts left out, some duplicated, some entirely recast, the whole become a process unto itself, the *objectum quod* instead of the *objectum quo*?

This is at the root of the crisis touched upon throughout this study. A shift in thinking concerning the Christian cosmology and anthropology has sunk tendrils deep into the very *sources* of the Christian religion itself. Christian faith, it must be insisted, is not the object of an intellectual articulation or an *a priori* theology, but Jesus Christ *lived*. The dynamic of that *living event* operative in one's life is awakened by grace and humility, self-control and prayer – all the result of charity lived because Christ is *known*. According to Cardinal Ratzinger, “the essence of religion is the relation of man beyond himself to the unknown reality that faith calls God. ...This relationship...is, properly speaking, the content of religion.”²⁸

The liturgy's principle effectiveness in the life of its participant derives from his openness to the power of the mystery it weaves into the *present*: the living dynamic of the Christ-event. This mystery can only be communicated to the individual by his willing openness towards a relationship with Christ which is true, real, humble and receptive. This relationship is the fundamental *source* in the Christian experience.

A palpable effort has been undertaken in recent years to alter many of the different *sources* of Christianity. This has been done in order to accommodate religion to a certain (already aging) vision of modernity, making it, thereby, more appealing to “modern man”. In this metamorphosis of the sources of Christian religion, long coming but accelerated after the Council, the shifting paradigms have arisen from neither humility and true encounter with Christ nor the secondary sources which are constituent elements in the depths of the Christian *thing*.

Some of the need for change has derived from an incipient boredom with the static quality of the *thing received but no longer fully understood* combined with an insatiable human fascination for novelty when faced with boredom. This syndrome is certainly operative in Christianity today. It is why Cardinal Ratzinger remarked in *Salt of the Earth* about “this staleness, this feeling that we

²⁸ Ratzinger, *Salt of the Earth*, 22.

are already long familiar with all this.”²⁹ He was commenting on the *ennui* present in so many who are weary of Christianity, thinking it a “matter of burdensome systems” instead of the “living treasure that is worth knowing.”³⁰

The solution to this boredom is not the fascination of superficial change. It rests, rather, in a fundamental return to martyrdom’s devotion, a radical embrace of the living Christ-event and a humble rediscovery of the underlying meanings of the many sources operative in Christian religion.

The “living treasure that is worth knowing” is Christ as personally experienced and *not* a seminar on a falsified understanding of man and his exercise of liberty deriving from rationalist incredulity. That this has become a major problem for true religion may be seen in the very notions of sin, the soul, judgment, eternity and similar things (often called “outdated” or “negative theology”) being whitewashed or eliminated altogether in liturgy, theology and the public consciousness of Christian discourse. This latter represents an effort to make Christianity more palatable to “modern man” for whom sacramental symbol and act has become incomprehensible and therefore meaningless. The liturgical changes in the Roman Rite have certainly been affected by a number of these elements. Cardinal Ratzinger comments on this in *A New Song for the Lord*:

That a human deed could offend God has become a completely unthinkable thought for many. So there is really no further need for redemption in the classical sense of Christian faith since it hardly occurs to anyone to see sin as the cause of the misery of the world and in one’s own life. Consequently there can naturally be no Son of God either Who comes into the world to redeem us from sin and Who for us dies on the cross. From here we can once again explain the fundamental change in the understanding of ritual and liturgy that has recently come about after a long time in the making: the primary object of liturgy is neither God nor Christ, but the “we” of the ones celebrating. And liturgy can not of course have adoration as its primary content since, according to the deistic understanding of God, there is no reason for it. There is just as little reason for it to be concerned with atonement, sacrifice, or the forgiveness of sin. Instead the point for those celebrating is to secure community with each other and thereby escape the isolation into which modern existence forces them...³¹

Liturgy is neither about man celebrating himself nor a communal tool used as a power base for freedom movements not of God. Worship, rather, presupposes man according to the *Christian cosmology* and *anthropology*. As such God, creation, man (body, soul and spirit), sin, human

²⁹ Ibid., 18.

³⁰ Ibidem.

³¹ Ratzinger, *A New Song for the Lord*, 136.

weakness, death, judgment, heaven and hell are not outdated modalities to be considered as doctrinal or liturgical accretions along the long path of a distorted development in an institutional Church now in need of systematic, modern revamping.

These doctrinal truths are irreformable substantive constituents of the Catholic faith which have always appeared in *bright* relief across the whole of liturgy, Scripture, Magisterium and history and must continue to do so until the Second Coming of Christ. They are fundamental elements in the story of true human, personal deliverance and the power that derives from poverty of spirit, meekness, long-suffering, gentleness and love born of living Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

Since liturgy is both man's service in his blessing of God and God's descent to man wherein the two meet in a living encounter of truth, it is impossible that God would enter into a white-washed, one dimensional monologue at man in the otherwise dynamic process of His visitations. Liturgy *is* the burning bush, and it is burning so that man might *be saved from himself and his tendency towards self-destruction*. Far from being "negative theology", sin, death and the actual threat of eternal damnation are simply one side of the Christian coin. The other is hope, glory, the beatific vision of God: the magnificent and *real* salvation of a humanity – and a universe – that is *really* lost and *really* in need of a deep rooted, genuine, permanent *freedom*.

In view of this truth about the state of man, Professor Fagerberg rightly describes liturgy as "a needle pulling thread" in an out between heaven and earth. That is because, to use a modern turn of phrase, God, heaven and glory are the "up-side" of religion while man, *constituted as he is according to the Christian revelation*, suffers from the constant syndrome of his own "down-side". Matter and spirit are interrelated in the drama of man's attaining true freedom. Any attempt to eliminate the immortality of the soul, sin, evil, judgment, heaven and hell from the Christian understanding of deliverance is to vitiate the religion itself. It consists of man's *whole* relationship with God – and with all its parts intact. Attempts to whitewash these elements from the liturgy is to falsify Catholic worship thus causing the needle to cease passing anywhere, altogether. This latter Cardinal Ratzinger repeats again and again when commenting on the need for a genuine liturgical reform: liturgy must be essentially true to its own *raison d'être*.

Despite the enthusiasm over modern man having "come of age", it is especially obvious in

the present century that he has become, if anything, more vicious and on a wider scale than ever before. In view of this man's need for *true worship* is equally more urgent than ever before. Through it he is fed body, soul and spirit with what touches his *need most radically*. True worship embodies and conveys a reality significantly deeper than what reason alone grasps, although reason certainly responds to the doctrinal content of the texts that worship employs.³²

In his book *Salt of the Earth*, Cardinal Ratzinger speaks about a transformation that has taken place in Catholic worship:

In our form of the liturgy there is a tendency that, in my opinion, is false, namely the complete "inculturation" of the liturgy into the contemporary world. The liturgy is thus supposed to be shortened; and everything that is supposedly unintelligible should be removed from it; it should, basically, be transposed down to an even "flatter" language. But this is a thoroughgoing misunderstanding of the essence of the liturgy and of liturgical celebration. For in the liturgy one doesn't grasp what's going on in a simply rational way, as I understand a lecture, for example, but in a manifold way, with all the senses, and by being drawn into a celebration that isn't invented by some commission but that, as it were, comes to me from the depths of the millenia, and ultimately, of eternity.³³

In *Feast of Faith* the Cardinal Ratzinger quotes the German scholar H. Gese on current problems in liturgy. Gese is opposed to the new tendencies because they violate what man needs and is given by the liturgical dimension of his life:

Let no one imagine that we can help man by cutting down on the sacramental dimension. The reverse is the case. People have been cutting down for a long time now, and this is what has caused so many misunderstandings. The only way really to help is to expound this central service of worship fully and in a positive spirit. And as for experimentation, it is *least* appropriate where the liturgy of the Lord's Supper is concerned...³⁴ [emphasis in original]

In the context from which this citation has been taken, the Cardinal has been explaining insights Gese has put forward penetrating the notion of eucharistic sacrifice and its continuity with the Jewish concept of *toda* or *thanksgiving sacrifice*, contemporary to Christ and His apostles. The

³² John Paul II, "Il Discorso di Giovanni Paolo II a Vescovi degli Stati Uniti Ricevuti in Visita *Ad Limina Apostolorum*", *L'Osservatore Romano*, Anno CXXXVIII, No 234, 10 October 1998, 6. "Conscious participation [in liturgical worship] does not mean the suppression of all subconscious experience, which is vital in a liturgy which thrives on symbols that speak to the subconscious just as they speak to the conscious...If subconscious experience is ignored in worship, an affective and devotional vacuum is created and liturgy can become not only too verbal but too cerebral. Yet the Roman Rite is...distinctive in the balance it strikes between a spareness and a richness of emotion: it feeds the heart and mind, the body *and* the soul." [emphasis in original]

³³ Ratzinger, *Salt of the Earth*, 176.

Cardinal is at pains to show the striking importance this has today since the idea of sacrifice, so fundamental to the root of human deliverance, is at stake in the liturgical crisis:

What is *toda*? Gese describes it like this: “The thanksgiving sacrifice presupposes a particular *situation*. If a man is saved from death, from fatal illness or from those who seek his life, he celebrates this divine deliverance in a service of thanksgiving which marks an existential new beginning in his life. In it he confesses God to be his deliverer by celebrating a thanksgiving (*toda*). He invites his friends and associates, provides the sacrificial animal...and celebrates...together with his invited guests, the inauguration of his new existence...In order to recall God’s deliverance and giving thanks for it, it is necessary to reflect on one’s pilgrimage through suffering, to bring to mind the process of redemption...It is not a mere sacrifice rite; it is a sacrifice in which one professes one’s involvement...Here we have a unity which embraces a service of word and a ritual meal, praise and sacrifice. The sacrifice cannot be misunderstood as a ‘gift’ to God; rather it is a way of ‘honoring’ the Deliverer. And the fact that the rescued man is able to celebrate ‘life restored’ in the sacred meal is itself the gift of God. ...The Lord’s Supper is the *toda* of the Risen One.”³⁵

The true situation of modern man is that his eternal destiny is at stake, just as it has been from the time of Adam and will be until the consummation of the ages. He is saved from bondage only by the victory of Christ. The Lord’s triumph over death in the consummate sacrifice He made of Himself on the Cross is man’s passage through the Red Sea of human life; the ascetic offering of the Son of God is man’s conquest of the powers of hell: the individual, personal union of body and soul, life and spirit to the suffering of Christ is the only way to lasting freedom. That comes definitively at life’s end, in friendship with God, in the glory of heaven. Life in the present world will never enjoy perfect freedom; claims to the contrary are illusions.

The Eucharistic liturgy is the Church’s *toda* to God for every man’s deliverance from sin and death. Therefore it would be contrary to the nature of liturgical action to misrepresent its true function. It is an *instrument by which something else takes place*. To shave off *any* part of the story of deliverance or to trivialize its cosmic importance by cheapening the whole is to run counter to the purpose and function of Christian worship. This is precisely what is risked in artificial remakes of the liturgical *organ* and why Cardinal Ratzinger speaks so consistently against the decomposition of a truly Catholic notion of worship. Every person’s involvement in the story of his deliverance involves nothing *but* the risk he runs – soul and body – with sin, death, loss of heaven

³⁴ Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, 59.

and going to hell. His deliverance rides on the salvation made possible through the death of the Son of God. For this he offers thanks in the gift of Christ Who redeems and gives grace to do well, the angels to help, the saints whose lives, prayers, and miracles aid in the fraternity of Christian charity.

For reason of this authentic freedom received through Christ, *all* the elements in the cosmic drama of man's salvation must be clearly evident in the liturgical fabric. They need to be found throughout the texts of the liturgy and manifest in the many non-rational elements in its sacramental employ. Because fallen man has a tendency to forget, repetition is an essential element in human discourse. Just as worship itself is repeated constantly, so too, *all* the truths it speaks of must be repeated constantly within the fabric of its own expression.

It is because of the story of man's deliverance that the liturgy "passes a needle" between heaven and earth, between the sacred and the profane and without equating the two. It raises man to the threshold of the divine while he still stands in the present. Liturgy repairs a breach in the cosmological fabric of creation, and in so doing strives to imitate the true and eternal worship of heaven – the *permanent reality*, the *land of true freedom* – to which every man is destined and given grace to strive.

That the worshipper is caught into this process is probably nowhere more explicit in liturgical texts than in the Cherubic Hymn of the Byzantine Liturgy. As the eucharistic gifts are being prepared for solemn procession towards their oblation, the faithful sing of the work they are doing. What lips confess in the Byzantine rite, *every* authentic liturgy accomplishes in the whole of its ritual action. This particular hymn expresses wonderfully the true nature of liturgical service:

Let us, who mystically represent the Cherubim, and sing the thrice-holy hymn to the life-creating Trinity, now set aside all earthly cares. That we may welcome the King of all, invisibly escorted by angelic hosts. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!³⁶

It is this fundamental truth, moreover, that gives liturgy its *festal character*. Because man is confronted with death – his weakened nature, his limitations, his mortality, the genuine threat of damnation for the sin towards which he moves himself – he has cause to celebrate his *salvation*. In worship Christ truly comes to him from His throne of majesty, descending in the splendor of the angels. Because man is held in bondage in so many ways, the hope and promise of the *Kyrios* alone

³⁵ Ibid., 55, 59.

³⁶ *Divine Liturgy of Our Father Saint John Chrysostom* (Pittsburgh: Byzantine Seminary Press, 1966), 28.

brings true joy. Because of His present advent through grace and Sacrament, the Christian believer has every cause to put aside earthly cares: he is being visited by the very God Who has scattered the stars and galaxies into the vast reaches of creation. This same God deigns to come into the very heart of daily human drudgery so that He might confer on man *pardon and peace*. Cardinal Ratzinger addresses this point in *Feast of Faith* when he says that “the new and unique Christian reality answers the questions of all men.”³⁷

Worship celebrates the freedom offered to one and all. In so doing it works to hold the glory of the Lord in a temporal moment of mystic contemplation, the Kingdom already come. God is found in the fleeting passage of divine worship, veiled though He remains. Still and all He is *truly perceived* there – through signs and symbols, colors and perfumes – and communicates His very Self in the Sacrament of divine Sacrifice.

Anthropologically all are of the same nature and it is the universal experience of human slavery that is addressed by the Christian *kerygma*. This is why the message of a freedom which is *Christian*, the fundamental truth celebrated in the cosmic worship of the liturgy, must be presented in a genuine *catholicity* that touches the very nature of man and his every dimension.

In view of the universal hope that is at its center, the liturgical feast is characterized by *joy*. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, His triumph over death is the reason we can celebrate our own trampling down of death. This joy is manifest in a variety of ways in the actions of public prayer and sacrament, none of them to be confused with the cheap fun so relentlessly pursued by the world at large. Cardinal Ratzinger says the novel Christian reality is that Christ’s Resurrection enables man to truly rejoice, and this is why the liturgy is the Christian *feast*:

All history until Christ has been a fruitless search for this joy. That is why the Christian liturgy – Eucharist – is, of its essence, the Feast of the Resurrection, *Mysterium Paschae*. As such it bears within it the mystery of the Cross, which is the inner supposition of the Resurrection. To speak of the Eucharist as the community meal is to cheapen it, for its price was the death of Christ... As for the joy it heralds, it presupposes that we have entered into this mystery of death. Eucharist is ordered to eschatology, and hence it is at the heart of the theology of the Cross. This is why the Church holds to the sacrificial character. ...The freedom with which we are concerned in the Christian feast – the feast of the Eucharist – is not freedom to devise new texts but the liberation of the world and ourselves from death.³⁸

³⁷ Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, 65.

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

This is why the liturgy, even when celebrated in relationship to events of true human suffering, still retains its elements of a sober Christian feasting. No where is this more evident than in the deep shifting threads between sorrow and joy, fear and hope, death and life evident throughout the fabric of the classic Roman Requiem Mass. In a liturgical ensemble of unparalleled richness, the City of God and the City of Man are woven into a dramatic tissue exuding hope for the dead, admonition for the living, the promise of Christ's triumph celebrated in a liturgical feast fully redolent of *human mortality* and *Christian victory*. In it the eschatological dimension of faith has immediate impact and presence; time is woven into eternity, and the full blush of the human creature – his passion and art, his weakness and strength – is drawn deeply into the consummation of Christ's paschal triumph of divine love. This is accomplished by a liturgical organ of striking capability, playing without pretense on every aspect of human nature, drawing its celebrants into the truths it makes present.

Furthermore the classic Requiem liturgy weaves its song with a specifically Christian sense of joy. Far from a contrived and therefore superficial sense of levity, this feast is fully conscious of human tears and sorrow. It does its work with color and sound fitted to mortal grief while the fabric of the whole bears constantly present the ontological joy of triumph and resurrection, that the crucified One comes in Paschal triumph in the *Mysterium Fidei*. In every eucharistic liturgy Jesus descends into time and space in the sacramental species: it is the *eschaton* in the *here* and *now*, the heart of Christian joy and feasting made present even in the midst of sorrow and death. This is the deeper celebration of the truth of human life redeemed, for it takes the human condition, *as it is*, and folds it into the hands of God.

The thread which passes between heaven and earth is what David Fagerberg calls the “thick end” of liturgy or those aspects about worship that the Church can not change. The “thin end”, he says, are the different parts of the ensemble, essential to the whole, but not unalterable:

Liturgy consists of the various meanings whereby the Church makes it possible for the faithful to experience through their senses the mysteries of religion, that is the sweetness of the Kingdom of God. These various means are material: the building, vessels, hymnody, psalmody, iconography, vestments, etc. Therefore the study of the deep grammar [the thick end of liturgy] cannot proceed without a study of these matters...

However, he continues with an analysis of the fuller spectrum:

When wading around in matters liturgical, one has in fact stepped into the headwaters of a river (*lex orandi*) which can be followed downstream into any number of channels (*lex credendi*). Liturgical theology involves ecclesiology, because the Church is the people which this ritual creates; and ecclesiology involves Christology since this is whose body the Church is; and this requires triadology for an ontological Christology and soteriology for a functional Christology; and redemption outlines a doctrine of sin, which assumes knowledge of what it means to stand aright, which is the doctrine of creation...The Church modifies the liturgy in its thin sense; in its thick sense it is the liturgy which creates the Church.³⁹

Fagerberg brings us to the famous axiom of Prosper of Aquitaine: *Legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi*. Rightly understood it reveals the fundamental relationship of worship to theology. *Orthodoxy* is not *ortho-pistis* (right believing) nor *ortho-didascalia* (right teaching): it is *right worshipping* (ortho-doxologia). The Church gathered in “sacramental discourse” is the very foundation or *primary source* of Christian faith. Worship is *theologia prima*: it is theology in action. Speaking of the historical meaning of *orthodoxy* Fr. Aidan Kavanagh says,

...[the] root sense of the word [*orthodoxy*] firmly contextualizes it in the early Church’s stress on faith not so much as an intellectual assent to doctrinal positions, but as a way of living the graced commonality of an actual assembly at worship before the living God. ...Christians do not worship because they believe. They believe because the One in whose gift faith lies is regularly met in the act of communal worship – not because the assembly conjures up God, but because the initiative lies with the God Who has promised to be there always. The *lex credendi* is thus subordinated to the *lex supplicandi* because both standards exist and function only within the worshipping assembly’s own subordination of itself to its ever present Judge, Savior, and unifying Spirit.⁴⁰

It is almost impossible for modern Christians to envision worship as more than a derivative of secondary theological erudition and directives from Church authority. This misconception is central to the current problem in liturgical reforms and operative in the underlying causes of the 1988 schism. Fr. Kavanagh continues in his text:

To reverse the maxim, subordinating the standard of worship to the standard of belief, makes a shamble of the dialectic of revelation. It was a Presence, not faith, which drew Moses to the burning bush, and what happened there was a revelation not a seminar. It was a presence, not faith, which drew the disciples to Jesus, and what happened there was not an educational program but His revelation to them as the long-promised Anointed One, the

³⁹ Fagerberg, 37-39.

⁴⁰ Kavanagh, 91, 92.

redeeming because reconciling Messiah-Christos...⁴¹

Clearly doctrine influences worship. But important to a right understanding of liturgy is the correct order of precedence represented by the famous axiom and its roots in the right relationship of revelation to man, the *relation of sources to those who receive them*. Kavanagh continues:

The law of belief does *not* constitute the law of worship. Thus the creeds and the reasoning which produced them are not the forces which produced baptism. Baptism gave rise to the Trinitarian creeds. So too the Eucharist produced, but was not produced by, a scriptural text, the eucharistic prayer, or all the various scholarly theories concerning the eucharistic real presence. Influenced by, yes. Constituted or produced by, no. Creeds, theories, texts, and prayers all emerged from that dialectical process of change and adjustment to change triggered by the assembly's regular baptismal and eucharistic encounters with the living God in its own faithful life, a life embracing saints and sinners alike.⁴²

Liturgy is *the* primary font, not so much as theological locus (which it can be), but *of the Christian life and faith itself*. As such it is certainly subject to the modification of the Church. In the development of doctrine, arising as it does from the *theologia prima* of the Church at her worship, theological insights can not help but become embedded in the liturgical expression after the passage of time. But such a process yields an integral doctrinal development from its antecedent liturgical seedbed. From that source the doctrinal reflection later appears more explicitly. This is what David Fagerberg refers to as modification in the "thin end" of liturgy. Similarly the outward forms and ceremonies, colored as they are by cultural and temporal factors, evolve in a natural and harmonious manner within the liturgical experience, reflecting the faith they make more manifest. Historically the process has never occurred in the reverse sequence except in cases of those seeking to alter the faith of the subjects of the liturgical rites so changed.

Even in authentic liturgical development, the *end* of liturgy remains the same, necessitating that the substance of liturgical form remain constant as well. The complex unity of interior substance and outward forms is an ontological reality, and because it is not purely spiritual, it is a composite being. The possibility of changing the *whole* by changing either its interior form or exterior matter is seriously risked when either element is artificially altered without due reverence for the sanctity of the rites *per se*, or without sufficient knowledge of liturgical history and the psychological/sociological impact public worship has on people and their behavior. This has

⁴¹ Ibidem.

clearly come into play in the liturgical changes in the Roman Church indicated not only by schism but in a more generally growing dissatisfaction with the actual state of the reform.

Since the *end* of human actions is “first in intention and last in execution”, the *end* of liturgy must be rightly understood in order to comprehend its purpose and effectiveness. Liturgy has everything to do with a cosmological adoration effected by man and angels in the power of Christ Who *recreates* the world through His Paschal Mystery. Man is dramatically caught in the center of this mystery and, so too, his deliverance is central to the mysteries of worship. Macarius of Egypt said this about the condition of man:

Before the Fall, the soul was to have progressed and so to have attained full manhood. But through the fall it was plunged into a sea of forgetfulness, into an abyss of delusion, and dwelt within the gates of hell. As if separated from God by a great distance, it could not draw near its Creator and recognize Him properly. But first through the prophets God called it back, and drew it to knowledge of Himself. Finally, through His own advent on earth, He dispelled the forgetfulness, the delusion; then breaking through the gates of hell, He entered into the deluded soul, giving Himself to it as a model. By means of this model the soul can grow to maturity and attain the perfection of the Spirit.⁴³

Since man has been created by God to adore Him and his ability is weakened by the effects of original sin, liturgy is instrumental in the *recreation* of his authentic life and the destiny towards which all his actions must tend. Although the recreation is effected by Christ it requires human cooperation. Hence, in order to worship God rightly a prerequisite must be operative: the discipline which capacitates a man to worship in the first place. This is the sacrament of Baptism, the ascetic foundation of the Christian life. While Baptism is the foundation, it presupposes an antecedent moral virtue of humble self-denial, demonstrating that *askesis* is indivisible from the perfection of supernatural charity.

There is an asceticism which leads to Baptism: it is stimulated by agape and is called mortification, justification, conversion. We may think of it as catechumenal asceticism. There is, however, also an asceticism which leads from baptism, from this conversion, and it is stimulated by charity (i.e. by the theological virtues received in the sacrament), and we shall call it liturgical asceticism because it is practiced by the baptized... *Askesis* increases the measure by which we can participate in the liturgical life to which baptism initiated us. Liturgy is where the Kingdom is symbolized in its fullest capacity, and *askesis* enlarges the eyes of the perceiver; it cleanses the surface of the liturgist to reflect glory... If liturgy

⁴² Ibidem.

⁴³ Macarius of Egypt, *The Philokalia*, Vol. 3 (London: Faber and Faber, 1986), 306.

means sharing the life of Christ (being washed in His resurrection, eating His body), and if *askesis* means discipline (in the sense of forming), then liturgical asceticism is the discipline required to become an icon of Christ and to make His image visible in our faces...⁴⁴

Liturgy, therefore, is the instrument by which the Kingdom is experienced here and now: God is adored, freedom is gratefully celebrated, Christ confers Himself, man is remade into the image of the Redeemer and this occurs in the new world of the *recreated*. The tear between the earthly and heavenly spheres of the cosmos is reknit. All this is what the Church's liturgy *is* and what it should express.

All of these elements and their inter-operative action in liturgical worship were once universally understood throughout the Church. It is to the whole of this liturgical effect that Saint Gregory the Great referred when he said,

...at the hour of Sacrifice, in response to the priest's acclamation, the heavens open up; the choirs of angels are witnessing the mystery; what is above and what is below unite; heaven and earth are united, matters invisible and invisible become united.⁴⁵

It is in the union of heaven and earth that the effect of man's deliverance is made present and real. For this reason the liturgy is a foretaste of heaven: it is the song of the redeemed, a hymn of triumph in the midst of a cosmic conflict. The Catechism of the Catholic Church concurs on this point:

In the earthly liturgy we share in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the Holy City of Jerusalem towards which we journey as pilgrims... With all the warriors of the heavenly army we sing a hymn of glory to the Lord.⁴⁶

Despite the magisterial worth of this teaching, this is simply not the way many Catholics view or experience liturgy, particularly in the West. Msgr. Klaus Gamber, who Cardinal Ratzinger says should, in "this hour of distress [concerning the liturgy] become the "father" to a new departure"⁴⁷ in a liturgical reawakening, offers the following analysis:

The concept of this *cosmic liturgy*, which continues to exist in the Eastern Churches, is founded on a precisely ordered, solemn conduct of liturgical worship. The concept ruled

⁴⁴ Fagerberg, 40, 41.

⁴⁵ Gregory, Saint, *Dial.IV*, 60, quoted in Klaus Gamber, *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy: Its Problems and Background*, trans. Klaus D. Grimm (San Juan Capistrano: Una Voce Press, 1993), 12.

⁴⁶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1090 (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1994).

⁴⁷ Joseph Ratzinger, *Preface*, in Klaus Gamber, *La Reforme Liturgique en Question* (Monastaire du Barroux: Editions Madeleine, 1992), 8.

out any of the forms of minimalism which, beginning in the Middle Ages, evolved in the West – forms of worship designed to celebrate the Holy Mysteries only to the degree absolutely necessary for validity... With the break between the Eastern and Western Churches, this important “drama” component of liturgical worship has been largely lost... Today, not much remains of these ideas, certainly not in liturgical worship; the cold breath of realism now pervades our worship.⁴⁸

If worship is an imitation of the heavenly liturgy, if it is ordered to man’s final end, if it is *the* Christian feast of a soldiering people on pilgrimage towards safety, if it is a foretaste of the heavenly Banquet of the Lamb, then this must be palpably evident in the manner in which the liturgy is carried out. Worship involves the whole of the human person and this *necessarily* includes his senses and artistic capabilities. It is not merely the exercise of his rational intellect or sense of imagination.

For this reason an element of the greatest importance must be found in an authentic liturgical fabric: the outward forms of ceremony and music must reflect, in an integrated manner, the discipline and character of all of worship’s other elements. This is why the Council and the Catechism state that the liturgy is a “hymn of glory to the Lord”.

The liturgy, as the act *par excellence* of man, is a festal song of love. As such it has been the repository of human artistic genius under the impulse of grace from its earliest beginnings. The Christian liturgy must, in this respect, manifest that unbroken continuum of worship whose festal and musical character originates in the beginnings of Jewish worship and passes into the immense wealth of Catholic Christianity. No where is this more richly developed than in the Western Catholic liturgical culture, now radically abandoned in the actual liturgical reforms.

The liturgy’s principal end is the adoration of God. Since it is primarily the worship of the Father by the Son carried out through the action of His hierarchical ministers and the faithful, it is by virtue of human voice and faculty that the earthly liturgy gives rise to its hymnal quality of *glory*.

Man has been created by God and endowed with all his faculties to the end that he might freely give praise to his Creator and Redeemer. Man is constituted by God as *homo adorans* and to serve that end he has also been made *homo faber*. He is the recipient of gifts ordered towards *doing*, towards *ars*. This latter is a magnificent implication of his having been made in the image of the Creator.

⁴⁸ Klaus Gamber, *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy*, 12, 13.

Not only has he been endowed with reason and free will, it is in virtue of both that he has been given his body and all its faculties. This *integrated being, man*, is constituted in such a way that he can imitate God analogously in His role as the Creator. It is in view of this constitutive element that one must understand the Biblical injunction regarding the worship of Israel and its passage into the cultic practices of the full Christian Revelation.

According to Cardinal Ratzinger a new zeal and curiosity about the faith should be manifest to the world in virtue of the Church's authentic purpose and being. He says that the freedom and breadth of Catholic theological thinking spring from two sources:

...the living experience of liturgy and the theology of the psalms. With the transition from the synagogue to the church, singing in worship had increased; at a very early date "hymns" had already been added to the psalms. In contrast to theology [developed by early Church Fathers], the psalms manifested an unpuritanical delight in music...which was bound to have an influence. The fact that these songs of Israel continued to be prayed and sung as hymns of the Church meant that the whole wealth of feeling of Israel's prayer was present in the Church... "...His praise shall continually be in my mouth...Let the afflicted hear and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me..."(Ps. 33,2-4) Delight in the Lord is to be meaningful and beautiful in itself; joy in the shared praises of Him, the awareness, through celebratory music-making, that God is worthy of worship – this is self-evident, it needs no theories...expressed joy manifests itself as the presence of the glory which is God; in responding to this glory, it actually *shares* in it.⁴⁹ [emphasis in original]

This statement should be juxtaposed to the present state of the liturgy. Comparing the sense of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* with the prevailing norms of today the Cardinal remarks,

...we find contrast which is characteristic of the difference, in general, between what the Council said and how it has been taken up by the postconciliar Church. [The Council Fathers addressed]...the tension between art and the simplicity of the liturgy; but when pastors and experts meet together, the pastoral issues predominate, with the result that the view of the whole starts to get out of focus...the Council document...is read one-sidedly in the interests of a particular concern, and the original balance [now only] becomes a useful rule of thumb: the liturgy needs utility music, and "actual church music" must be cultivated elsewhere – it is no longer suitable for the liturgy. People are prepared to overlook the fact that, in this view, "actual church music" is no longer actually music for the Church, that the Church no longer has "actual church music". The years which followed witnessed the increasingly grim impoverishment which follows when beauty for its own sake is banished from the Church and all is subordinated to the principle of "utility". One shudders at the lackluster face of the postconciliar liturgy as it has become, or one is bored with its banality

⁴⁹ Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, 114.

and its lack of artistic standards.⁵⁰

When the Cardinal says there is no need of theory to underpin “joy in the Lord” and that the reason for celebratory music praising God is “self-evident”, it is because an anthropological analysis recognizes art as a natural *exteriorization* of what men gifted with the grace of talent perceive *within*. Those without such gift still see within but *share* in the expressed art of the gifted. *Homo adorans* is also *homo faber*, and as such his gifts are ordered to the praise of the Creator.

In Aidan Kavanagh’s book *On Liturgical Theology*, he addresses an important point in this regard. In analyzing the liturgy he makes an analogous reference to the art of poetry. This is what, in part, Professor Fagerberg referred when he too spoke of a “thickened sense” of liturgy:

In the case of City and the Church, the need to image in order to know gives rise to special sorts of discourse which are more necessary than optional. The discourse thickens meaning found in reality and then increments that meaning with style. People do this sort of thing when statements of mere fact fail due to the complexity of what the statement needs to express. It is not poetry to report the fact that I love someone. It is poetry to say “How do I love thee? Let me count the ways...” Meaning is being thickened and is about to be incremented with style...

He illustrates his point by citing works of Walt Whitman and Robert Frost, and then continues:

Each has in his own way thickened the meaning he found in...reality, and then thickened that meaning with such exquisite style that everyone else is stunned by the reality being revealed with sharp precision, seduced into transacting more deeply with the real. Thickening meaning and then incrementing that meaning with style is no easy task, and it does not happen by accident. It is a knowledgeable accomplishment of the highest order, more so even than what goes on in laboratories, banks, and institutions of what is called higher learning. Writing a sonnet is at least as hard as figuring compound interest or teaching a course, which is why so few even attempt it. ...Sacramental discourse is the same sort of enterprise. It is not mere garnish to a dull dish of Gospel. Sacrament is to Gospel what style is to meaning. ...The Good News...can never be left as a merely prosaic statement of fact... Sacramental discourse will bespeak Gospel in ways that embrace and articulate not just words but the whole worldly context in which such a pouring out occurs...⁵¹

For this reason liturgy is *the locus sine qua non* for artistic expression. It is not a vehicle for parading the talent of the artist, but a place for art to reflect God’s glory. An opposition to art as such is suggested by the idea that “simplicity” and “actual participation” necessarily exclude the

⁵⁰ Ibid., 99, 100.

⁵¹ Kavanagh, 47-50.

“elitist” employment of art and music in liturgical service. This is a false dialectic:

Liturgy is for all...Thus it must be “simple”. But that is not the same as cheap. There is a banal simplism, and there is the simplicity which is expression of maturity. It is this second, true simplicity which applies in the Church. The greatest efforts of the spirit, the greatest purification, the greatest maturity – all these are needed to produce simplicity. The requirement for simplicity, properly speaking, is identical with the requirement of purity and maturity...⁵²

It is in this vein, then, that genuine art, far from an exclusive “elitism” that holds people at bay in worship, reflects the humility and purity of the artist whose gift is put at the public service of the Church, while drawing others into an *active-while-silent participation*:

...the *participatio actuosa*...of the whole “People of God”...this idea has been fatally narrowed down, giving the impression that active participation is only present where there is evidence of external activity – speaking, singing, preaching, liturgical action...Article 30 [in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*] also speaks of silence as a mode of participation...listening, the receptive employment of the senses and the mind, spiritual participation, are surely just as much “activity” as speaking is...What we have here [by way of contrast], surely, is a diminished view of man which reduces him to what is verbally intelligible...there are a good number of people who can sing better “with the heart” than “with the mouth”; but their hearts are really stimulated to sing through the singing of those who *have* the gift of singing “with their mouths”. It is as if they themselves actually sing in the others; their thankful listening is united with the voices of the singers in the one worship of God. Are we to compel people to sing when they can not, and, by so doing, silence not only their hearts but the hearts of others too?⁵³

This point is extremely important. In the present state of affairs, *utilitarianism* – in the form of a pragmatic *popularism* – has largely eroded an anthropologically sound understanding of the elements of worship. Taken as a whole, liturgy is a vehicle in which individual artistic expression is put at the service of all in the adoration of God. By way of direct contrast, in *popular utilitarianism* the gifts that God gives to some are *denied to all because they have not been given to all*. This is an example of a destructive *egalitarianism* having found its way into Catholic worship. It squeezes human excellence from a sphere of the greatest importance and influence, and replaces it with flattened, banal commonality. This latter not only silences the art song of noble liturgy, it also silences the larger influence liturgy has in the construction of a redeemed, *humanized* society.

...A Church which only makes use of utility music as fallen for what is, in fact, useless.

⁵² Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, 122.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 123.

She too becomes ineffectual. For her mission is a far higher one. As the Old Testament speaks of the Temple, the Church is to be the place of “glory”, and as such, too, the place where mankind’s cry of distress is brought to the ear of God. The Church must not settle down with what is merely comfortable and serviceable at the parish level; she must arouse the voice of the cosmos and, by glorifying the Creator, elicit the glory of the cosmos itself, making it also glorious, beautiful, habitable and beloved. Next to the saints, the art which the Church has produced is the only real “apologia” for her history. It is this glory which witnesses to the Lord, not theology’s clever explanations for all the terrible things which, lamentably, fill the pages of her history. The Church is to transform, improve, “humanize” the world – but how can she do that if at the same time she turns her back on beauty, which is so closely allied to love? For together, beauty and love form the true consolation in this world, bringing it as near as possible to the world of the resurrection. The Church must maintain high standards; she must be a place where beauty can be at home, she must lead the struggle for “spiritualization” without which the world becomes the “first circle of hell”...⁵⁴

The liturgy is nothing less than the Church’s love poem to the Lord, her hymn of praise and glory to the God of Redemption. To this end, human artistry – the work of *homo faber* in the service of *homo adorans* – must orchestrate a praise which is not prosaic, but cosmic and glorious. Cardinal Ratzinger comments on this point when he says, “Glorification is the central reason why Christian liturgy must be cosmic liturgy, why it must, as it were, orchestrate the mystery of Christ with all the voices of creation.”⁵⁵

Capable human art that is *pure* (by its being ordered towards God and not the artist) seeks to imitate the glory of heaven. In employing the work of artists in her worship, the Church shares in the glory which they imitate. In the praise of the liturgy art turns into the new song of the redeemed and celebrates true deliverance. It is this celebration of freedom-in-God that comprises the *human motive* underlying the greatest of all creaturely media of *human expression* – *Catholic worship*. The self-evidence for joyful, celebratory music is no less true for all the other art forms involved in the liturgical ensemble. The full panoply of Christian art and architecture, as well as all the human expressions of *stylized meaning*, are “thickenings” of the Gospel truth put at the service of the court of heaven. These artistic embellishments are, according to Fr. Kavanagh, “more necessary than optional”. These, too, are antecedent realities, operative elements in *the wisdom of the Church’s received tradition*, manifest in the complex thing which is her worship.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 124, 125.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 115.

It is in view of this analysis of the *liturgical instrument* that any approach to liturgy – and *especially* to its authentic restoration – should be undertaken. *Humility before the source*, humility in relating the source to its anthropological and historical antecedents, is essential. In the absence of such an approach, the imbalance introduced by the disordering of constituent parts can only bear a fruit native to the disorder itself. It is precisely in view of such a situation that grave divisions have grown up in the Church over significant changes in its public worship.

One resolution to this condition, for some, ended in the schism of 1988.

C. After the Council

In the ecclesial climate of today's Roman Catholic world much of the forgoing analysis regarding liturgy is practically unheard of. If such concepts are put forward, they are almost as often received blankly or with a kind of knowing condescension. The reality of Western liturgical life is generated by a praxis that does not generally, of itself, reflect a cosmic worship in the vein of the forgoing discussion.

Nonetheless the historical liturgical tradition of the Roman Rite contains all the principles of just such a worship, even if that tradition was in places atrophied through neglect or misunderstanding. It was precisely this *atrophy* and *misunderstanding* that the Council sought to address in its program for a liturgical restoration. To analyze the Church's historical patrimony requires embracing the historical attitude of reverence for the *sanctity* of received liturgical tradition. This historical posture will serve to explain, at least in part, why liturgical change can not be a casual affair rooted in superficialities, and why it must *in fact* manifest *organic* development within the whole of the Judeo-Christian tradition of worship.⁵⁶

For this reason liturgical development has *never* been rapid and artificial. It has *always* been slow and imperceptible, deriving from the gradual work of the Holy Spirit Who does not contradict Himself. The fact that this kind of organic development did not take place in the Roman Liturgy after the Council and that another process has, explains why many Roman Catholics have been plunged into a crisis of conscience regarding the actual state affairs in the, at times, *incredible* transformation of their traditions of worship.

The outward forms of each rite have an intrinsic relation to their internal, sacramental activities. What comprises a rite, as such, must be understood as more than what is printed in books, be they liturgical, canonical, or academic. An authentic liturgical restoration is not merely the result of textual studies, or changes in law. Cardinal Ratzinger states this clearly:

...that fact that it [the Missal of Paul VI] was presented as a new edifice, set up against that

⁵⁶ Gamber, *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy*, 27-28. "If we assume that the liturgical rite evolved on the basis of shared traditions – and nobody who has at least some knowledge of liturgical history will dispute this – then it can not be developed anew in its entirety. ...Since the liturgical rite has developed over time, further development continues to be possible. But such continuing development has to respect the timeless character of all rites; and its development has to be organic in nature."

which had been formed over history, that the latter [the Gallo-Roman liturgy as codified in the missal under Pius V] was forbidden and that the liturgy was made in some way to appear no longer a vital process, but as the product of specialist erudition and juridical competence has brought upon us extremely grave harm.⁵⁷

Rites – the fruit of the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the creative hand of man – are slowly born within specific human environments and highly colored by these in their own evolving cultural matrices. They are produced by an homogeneous development across long stretches of time, and comprise entire ritual structures characterized not only by the Tradition which is divine Revelation, but also by ecclesiastical traditions of music, art, signs, symbols, gestures, all expressive of the doctrinal realities they are the instruments in making manifest. Furthermore many ecclesial traditions are as old as the Church itself. In liturgy the two elements of Divine Tradition and ecclesial tradition can only be separated by artificial contrivance.

The various Rites make for complete liturgical environments within which certain groups of the faithful find their access to the universal Mystery of Redemption and their own identity as Christians. They evoke specific spiritualities and ingrained, inherent senses of piety. They evolve slowly under the watchful eye of the Church and have never emerged overnight. The classic Roman rite of Mass is the oldest eucharistic rite in the Church⁵⁸ and the one most identical to its form in Christian antiquity. Certainly it more than any other deserved a sympathetic fostering and preservation as the Council Fathers directly state in the introduction to *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

What happened to this liturgical rite after the Council was otherwise. It was subjected to radical alteration in many different ways, so much so that according to Cardinal Ratzinger, “the impression arose that the liturgy was “manufactured,” that it was not something that existed prior to us, something “given,” but that it depends upon our decisions.”⁵⁹

The principles, and their implications, as laid down by the Council which sought an authentic moment of development within the historical Roman Rite were not respected in many of the changes that were effected. This is readily borne out by the facts despite enthusiasm displayed by some in favor of the actual state of affairs now operative throughout the Latin Church.

⁵⁷ Joseph Ratzinger, *La Mia Vita*, trans. Giuseppe Reguzzoni (Milan: Edizioni San Paolo, 1997), 112.

⁵⁸ Gamber, *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy*, 10.

⁵⁹ Ratzinger, *La Mia Vita*, 112.

In contrast to the insistence of some of the experts behind the scene, the laity have certainly demonstrated that the actual liturgical reform “has brought upon us very great harm.” In the face of radical liturgical and doctrinal breakdowns and when resisting aggression in its favor, in many places throughout the world groups of Catholics clung to what was once the universal norm throughout the length and breadth of the Roman Church. This they did by maintaining what they had already received and known, something already long-tried and proven by the Church’s experience as well as their own. Nor were they alone: many priests were sympathetic to the same ideal and ministered to them. It was not a simple question of “sentimental longing” for days gone by but, in many instances a decision driven by circumstance and a difficult resolution of conscience.

It should be noted that this phenomenon (whose participants tend to label themselves *Traditionalists*) exists in many of the liturgically-minded Christian denominations throughout the world today. This is not surprising since the generality of Christendom has been deeply influenced by the philosophical and social ideology of the modern era. The Christian world is perceptibly fracturing into two general camps. One calls for increasing change and liberalization of Christian principles. The other opposes that process, tending to identify itself with historic and received religious traditions – biblical, doctrinal, liturgical – all long-proven authentic in a collective, ecclesial experience known by individual, personal experience. This paradigm, of course, can not be categorically applied to everyone but certainly expresses itself within the Catholic Church. It is the formal constitutive of those “two churches living side by side” in Catholicism that Cardinal Ratzinger refers to in *Salt of the Earth*.

The depth of the liturgical crisis, and the unwillingness of some of the faithful to accept change they perceived as too radical and in many instances *not* an organic development within the received tradition, fomented the 1988 schism. It was one in which liturgy, doctrine, history, abuse of power, personal faith, concern for the religious formation of children and emotion were all deeply operative and interwoven. Similar schisms have taken place in Anglicanism and Lutheranism in recent years and for the same reasons – certain truths were being marginalized in the main body of all three of these ecclesial entities. Cardinal Ratzinger comments on the reasons governing schisms:

One of the fundamental discoveries of the theology of ecumenism is that schisms can only occur in the Church when people cease to live and love certain truths and values of the

Christian faith. That truth which has been marginalized becomes autonomous and subsists separated from the totality of the ecclesial structure, and around it forms a new movement...⁶⁰

In the case of the schism which precipitated the Motu Proprio *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta* Cardinal Ratzinger continued,

Several reasons have probably led many people to take shelter in the old liturgy. The main one is that they find the dignity of the sacred preserved there. After the Council, many consciously made “desacralization” a program of action... Worship, to the extent that it must be performed, should be expressed in the non-sacrality of daily life, in love lived out. Urged on by such reasoning, people have abandoned vestments, stripped churches as much as possible of the splendor which evokes the sacred, and reduced liturgy to the language and gestures of ordinary life by means of greetings, public signs of friendship, and similar things... With such theory and practice we have certainly lost sight of the real connection between the Old and New Testaments.⁶¹

With such theory and practice we have certainly lost sight of the real connection between tradition and the Second Vatican Council as well. The issues at stake in the actual alteration of the received forms of the Roman Rite certainly transcend the question of the 1988 schism. They encompass broader questions regarding liturgy and history, spirituality and theology, and will be with the Church until the root of the present liturgical crisis is squarely addressed: the Council’s will regarding liturgical reform has yet to be applied as the Fathers intended.

What follows is an example of the dichotomy between the intention of the Council and an ideology that has driven the liturgical process since its closure. In his book *Roman Catholic Worship: Trent to Today*, James F. White, Professor of Liturgical Studies at Notre Dame University, states quite plainly that,

We shall take the position that there were essentially two liturgical movements, occurring consecutively. The first, or early, liturgical movement began in the early 1830s and lasted through World War II. Its landmark document of termination might well be the encyclical, *Mediator Dei*, of Pius XII in 1947. The second, or late, liturgical movement began soon after World War II and culminated in Vatican II’s *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*. Our position is that the two liturgical movements had different objectives and that quite different personnel were involved. For the first liturgical movement, the term “restoration” is crucial. It looked back to restoring treasures lost or overlooked but not to changing the liturgy itself. For this reason, we can call the first movement the *romantic liturgical movement*. It might also be called the *monastic liturgical movement* since its chief promoters were

⁶⁰ Ratzinger, “Speech to the Bishops of Chile”, 5.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 7, 8.

usually monastics... The second liturgical movement revolved around the word “reformation” and planned significant changes in the liturgy. Its chief promoters were diocesan priests and a considerable number of lay people who dreamed of things that the first liturgical movement never dared. It could justifiably be labeled the reformist or parish liturgical movement. There seems to be a clear shift as *Mediator Dei* marks the end of one era in 1947 and new ideas and leaders take over. Not all the ideas are new (importance of scripture)... But the ideas were advocated with a new style and vehemence... The distance from *Mediator Dei* to the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* is great even though the time span is but sixteen years.⁶² [emphasis added]

Enough has been discussed regarding the first principles of liturgical reform laid down by the Council Fathers in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* to discredit this not untypical assertion that Vatican II indicated a new direction for the Church in its approach to the liturgy.

It is certain that a broadening of liturgical practices was foreseen. This included, of course, an expansion of the vernacular language in the rites themselves. But equally clear is the fact that there can be no authentic liturgical reform which does not recognize “fostering and preserving” rites means their organic continuity with the Church’s received tradition. This remains an irreformable principle and is maintained everywhere in the Council documents. For this reason the *objective* of any liturgical movement must remain *identical* with the Church’s own objective or it can not be authentic. The Council explicitly used the term *restoration* as well as *reform*, the context demonstrating that the two are understood as parts of a *synthetic* process, and *not one that is successive*. Fr. John W. Mole sheds light on the question in an article in the *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*:

...the eclipse of *Mediator Dei* was caused by a revolutionary ferment which masqueraded as “the spirit of Vatican II” and lodged in the minds of the faithful the gnostic notion that the Church had entered a new era in complete discontinuity with all that had gone before. Out of this miasma arose the myth of two churches, pre-conciliar and post-conciliar, the former belonging to the irrelevant past and the latter to the promising future. ...the post-conciliar liturgical movement became biased in favor of the anthropocentric tendency to an extent which militated against the theocentricity or God-centeredness of Pius XII’s encyclical. ...The late Cardinal Decourtray, Primate of France, put it succinctly when he sadly remarked that the worshipping assembly is more focused on itself than on God.⁶³

Article 23 of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* is introduced in such a way as to clearly indicate the

⁶² James F. White, *Roman Catholic Worship: Trent to Today* (New York: Paulist Press, 1995), 71.

Council's understanding of the relation of tradition to an authentic liturgical development: "In order that sound tradition may be retained and yet the way open to legitimate progress..."⁶⁴

Simply put, any "liturgical movement" that does not share the Council's stated objectives can not be of the mind of the Church. The professor reveals, however, an *ideological* position when he informs us with his own *revisionist reason* against radical changes held prior to the Council:

...the papacy was occupied by two of the most reactionary of Popes, Gregory XVI (1831 – 1846) who decried the notion that the Church needed reform, and Pius IX (1846 – 1878) who issued the *Syllabus of Errors* in 1864 condemning a wide swath of "progress, liberalism, and modern civilization." Many of the liturgical developments of this period need to be seen in the light of a generally conservative papacy until John XXIII (1958 – 1963) threw open the windows of the Church to the modern world and spoke of *aggiornamento*.⁶⁵

Hence we are led to understand that the "reactionary" policies of pre-Vatican II Popes (which, he does not add, identified as erroneous that political and doctrinal liberalism which, in fact, undermines authentic Christian faith and practice and has come to split Christendom into two implacably opposed camps) have been replaced by "open minded" policies to – it is implied everywhere and all the time – the very thing the "reactionary" policies condemned. White plainly contrasts these Popes with Pope John XXIII, who, he says, "threw open the windows of the Church to the modern world". This expresses the common view that Pope John XXIII *intended* his *aggiornamento* to open the Church to "progress, liberalism, and modern civilization".

This is *far* removed from his actual intention. In his opening speech to the newly convened Council Fathers, Pope John declared that the "doctrine, pure and integral, without any attenuation or distortion," along with the "acts of the Council of Trent and First Vatican Council" was to "shine forth" as a result of the coming Council. White quite incorrectly infers that Pope John XXIII was "open-minded" *simpliciter*, and that his predecessors were *not*, and that reform – eventually change of every sort in every area of the Catholic Church and its life – is the mark of the Catholic who is not "reactionary". If one is not "reactionary" then surely, in the present political climate, one is open to "progress, liberalism, and modern civilization". Saint Paul, by way of contrast, tells us "be not conformed to this world" (Romans 12, 2).

⁶³ Robert W. Mole, "Mediator Dei: End of Eclipse," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, December 1997, 22.

⁶⁴ *SC*, 23.

⁶⁵ White, 70,71.

It is in this vein that the liturgy was politicized and plunged into an ideological struggle, subtle or otherwise. The liturgy became a means for some to change Catholic polity to “progress, liberalism, and modern civilization”, a manipulation unspeakably alien to the true nature of worship.

Nothing can be more harmful to the authentic work of the Church than categorizing Popes and their policies, pitting them against each other in an effort to create a point of rupture in the *necessarily* continuous fabric of Catholic life and faith. This process has assuredly happened and the liturgy has been one of its worst battlegrounds. This is born out by Cardinal Ratzinger:

Innumerable articles/explanations give the impression that everything changed after the Council and that everything that went before it is now lacking in value or at best, is valid only by its light. The Second Vatican Council is not approached as part of the whole living Tradition of the Church, but as the end of Tradition and a starting over from zero. The truth is that the Council did not define any dogma and deliberately desired to express itself at a more modest level, simply as a pastoral council. Nevertheless there are many who interpret it almost as the *superdogma* which makes the rest unimportant. This impression is reinforced by some current trends. What used to be considered as the most sacred, the received form of the liturgy, suddenly appears to be the most forbidden and the most safely rejected. No criticism of post-conciliar options is permitted... All this leads many to ask themselves if today's Church is really the same as yesterday's, or if it has been replaced without notice...⁶⁶

White does not recount that John XXIII's successor, Pope Paul VI, frequently lamented the divisions which had come to pass in the Church arising from an *aggiornamento* misunderstood as license to depart from revelation and the Church's received wisdom and patrimony. Such departure is the hallmark of that “progress, liberalism” and godless “modern civilization” quite accurately identified and condemned by the Popes he calls “reactionary” and a good many others besides. These condemnations are echoed (albeit with a different language) most recently in Pope John Paul's encyclical *Fides et Ratio* when speaking against the erroneous trends found in modern philosophical thought.

Professor White's idea that the nineteenth century liturgical movement was *romantic* and *monastic* is another position accepted by the many of the advocates of what he calls the “second or late liturgical movement”. It is a position which insinuates the earlier movement's inapplicability to the Church at large because it was fostered by monks, or as the reasoning goes, created a

liturgical consciousness only realizable by closed congregations of Latin monastics with specialized training and tastes.

This is not the case since any congregation can be taught to actively engage itself in the Latin liturgy provided they have a priest knowledgeable and willing to lead them into a deepened experience of their own, authentic patrimony. If the Orthodox faithful can sing and worship in Old Slavonic and Jews can do the same in Hebrew, so too Catholics of all stripes the world over can be educated to a living embrace and vital participation in their own restored, historical rites. This is precisely what the Council wanted in its vision for liturgical reform.. Thomas Day sheds some light on this point in his book *Why Catholics Can't Sing*:

For decades before Vatican II, most of the promoters of renewal through the liturgy had always looked to the sung Mass (the old-fashioned High Church ceremony) as the most thorough liturgical expression of faith in action. The future, they predicted, belonged to the High Mass – not necessarily the Baroque spectacle but a liturgy so intense that emotions could only “come out” in song. For me the predicted future arrived in 1961. In June of that year I attended a Baccalaureate Mass at a Jesuit preparatory school. ...the seniors sang the various choral parts of the Ordinary of the Mass (Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei), as well as all the responses. The chandeliers rattled from the noise of their glorious singing. The language was ancient Latin and the music Gregorian Chant, but for everyone there this High Mass with the singing congregation was the liturgical equivalent of the latest nuclear technology. “This is the future,” I said to myself, “and it works.” Latin and English will share space in this future, but more liturgies will be High Masses sung by the congregation and choir from beginning to end, just like this one.⁶⁷

But then:

The future ... decided to take some unexpected turns before arriving. A few years later, the music for the Baccalaureate Mass at this same school was something in the folk manner and striking only for its juvenile banality. Most of the graduates did not sing. The future now belonged to the Johnnys-come-lately who had hitherto shown no interest at all in liturgical renewal; they demanded that the High Mass, even in English, would have to go.⁶⁸

The simplest of Roman parishes and the most ordinary of Catholic people are thoroughly capable of singing Mass in Latin, understanding the fundamental texts and following and

⁶⁶ Ratzinger, “Speech to the Bishops of Chile”, 9, 11.

⁶⁷ Thomas Day, *Why Catholics Can't Sing: The Culture of Catholicism and the Triumph of Bad Taste* (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 41.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*.

embracing the liturgical action. Furthermore, any priest can learn to celebrate Mass sympathetically according to the practice of tradition. What is necessary to this process is *the interest and motivation to do so*.

The Roman Rite was too colored, it was said, by monastic elements. As a result they have disappeared from the reformed texts and practices. Gone, too, is Latin and Gregorian Chant despite the Council's explicit mandate that both should be preserved, fostered, and carefully taught in seminaries and religious novitiates.

The question of the disappearance of Latin is summarized by Romano Amerio, *peritus* to the Central Preparatory Commission for the Council, in his encompassing work *Iota Unum: A Study of Changes in the Catholic Church in the Twentieth Century*:

The extermination of Latin in the liturgy...contradicts article 36 of the Council's constitution on the matter, which decreed, "Linguae Latinae usus in ritibus Latinis servetur." Its use was in fact restricted first of all to the canon, and then dropped altogether in favor of an integral vernacularization of the Mass. It also contradicts Pius XII's encyclical of 1947, *Mediator Dei* which reiterated "the serious reasons the Church has for firmly maintaining the unconditional obligation the celebrant has to use the Latin tongue." It also contradicts John XXIII's *Veterum Sapientiae* of 1962: "Let no innovator dare to write against the use of Latin in the sacred rites ... nor let them in their folly attempt to minimize the will of the Holy See in this matter." Lastly, it contradicts Paul VI's own apostolic letter, *Sacrificium Laudis*, which speaks against a delatinization that "attacks not only this bountiful spring of civilization, this rich treasure of piety, but attacks too the decorum, the beauty and the original vigor of the prayer and song of the liturgy."⁶⁹

The disappearance of Latin was not something approved of *per se* by authority so much as it was the resultant accumulation of indults against its normative use. The overall process towards a vernacularization of the liturgy swept away the Council's clearly indicated *liturgical norm* in a tidal wave of rapid change. This gained control under a popular enthusiasm asserting that the Council said Latin had to go. Although this was never its intention, the disappearance of Latin contributed immediately to the dissolution of the unity of worship, ecclesiastical studies and doctrine. Each of these aspects had been the subject of strong magisterial admonitions in defense of Latin from the Council of Trent onwards.⁷⁰

As to the reformed liturgy, Pope Paul VI's directives for the use of Latin were simply

⁶⁹ Romano Amerio, *Iota Unum: A Study of Changes in the Catholic Church in the Twentieth Century*, trans. John Parsons (Kansas City: Sarto House, 1996), 612.

ignored. His instruction *Jubilate Deo*, prescribing Latin chants of the Mass that the faithful were to know and sing, has had almost no effect whatever. Indeed, Professor White clearly states his position on the matter when saying, “attempts to revive plainsong now [1994] seem like a good run down the wrong road but two generations ago they could stir people.”⁷¹ By way of contrast, Pope John Paul II in his *ad limina* address to the bishops of the United States on October 9, 1998, told them,

The use of the vernacular...does not mean that the Latin language, and especially the chants which are so superbly adapted to the genius of the Roman Rite should be wholly abandoned...⁷²

Plainsong, and a good deal more, *still* stir people. Despite the Council’s explicit will to the contrary, Latin, chanting, signs and gestures so much a part of the fabric and ethos of the historical Roman liturgy quite obviously were not part of what the “later” liturgical movement was interested in cultivating. The *Council’s* will in the matter was simply set to the side. These elements of the liturgy, it must be insisted, were not enthusiastically promoted by the monastics and participants of the “early” liturgical movement because they were *romantic*. They were promoted because they are integral parts of the historical Roman liturgy.

These attendant forms are of the greatest value in revitalizing a desiccated liturgical expression reduced to muttered and hurried “Low Masses” and its concomitant, *anti-liturgical* mindset invariably fixed on notions of *validity* and sacramental *effect* instead of *liturgy as cosmic worship*. What is more, their use helps overcome a narrow-mindedness that distrusts embracing rich human art in Catholic worship. That in turn promotes the development of the unique culture of the Catholic West, deepening the life and experience of *all* in human society. As corollary to Cardinal Ratzinger’s remark “there is no church music in church”, often the only experience of Western liturgical art is to be had in the museum or concert hall where it is artificially presented, bereft of its living soul – the liturgical *prayer* of which it is a living an integral expression.

In the 1950’s and 1960’s, when the restoration of these rich external elements had begun to take a wide hold in the Roman Church, the “later” liturgical movement abolished them. This had quite nothing to do with their inapplicability to the Church at large since their continued use and

⁷⁰ For a discussion of these aspects of the question see Amerio, 56-60, 614-618.

⁷¹ White, 2.

development is precisely what the Council mandated.

Professor White concedes that certain desirable features were found in the “earlier” movement but evinces enthusiasm for the arrival of “things no one dared” carried out by the “reformist or parish liturgical movement”, an authority found nowhere in the Council or its documents.

Instead, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* states emphatically that “no other person [than the Apostolic See and diocesan bishops as permitted by Roman authority], not even a priest, may add, remove, or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority”.⁷³ The principle is drawn directly from *Mediator Dei*:

Private individuals, therefore, even if they be clerics, may not be left to decide for themselves in these holy and venerable matters, involving as they do the religious life of Christian society along with the exercise of the priesthood of Jesus Christ and the worship of God...⁷⁴

Cardinal Ratzinger comments on *why* it can not be the product of such individuals:

...when the liturgy is something that everyone makes by himself, it is no longer gives us that which is its true quality: an encounter with the mystery, which is not our product, but the origin and source of our life...⁷⁵

More regarding this point will be examined shortly. What is important for the moment is to say that it pertains to the Apostolic See, and *not* diocesan priests and laity, to control the organic development of public worship. Professor White does, however, describe what has actually come to pass in a fecund deviation from the Council’s directives.

The attitude concerning “monastic romanticism” of the nineteenth century liturgical movement was sharply expressed in a 1956 book, *Life and Liturgy*, by Fr. Louis Bouyer. Later he was appointed to Consilium, the commission erected by Pope Paul VI for the implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, and became a figure in the reforms. In his book, after excoriating the deficient scholarship of the well-known Benedictine liturgist Dom Gueranger and the first fruits of the “early” liturgical movement, Fr. Bouyer assures his readers that,

Without bold and well-founded criticism such as this – bold because it is well-founded –

⁷² John Paul II, “Il Discorso a Vescovi degli Stati Uniti Ricevuti in *Ad Limina Apostolorum*”, 6.

⁷³ *SC*, 22.

⁷⁴ *Mediator Dei*, 58.

⁷⁵ Ratzinger, *La Mia Vita*, 112.

some of the most faithful heirs of what is of lasting value in Solesmes' bequest could never have succeeded, as they did, in pushing on to discover the true essence of the liturgy.⁷⁶

Here is an example of a prevalent feature of the "second liturgical movement": Fr. Bouyer holds his view to be the correct one and does not hesitate to inform his readers that it *is* the correct one. Practice has become that once informed by a liturgical expert, it is understood that his erudition – not infrequently synonymous with his own erroneous opinion – must be embraced without argument. This abrasive trait has taken on what Professor White quite rightly calls "vehemence," – the kind displayed by those who made the liturgical reform what Cardinal Ratzinger calls a "product of specialist erudition and juridical competence." These persons have also developed into the source of greatest intolerance towards those who have not received their reforms with unbridled enthusiasm. They are the same who have consistently shown the least sympathy to the continuing widespread attachment to the classical Roman liturgy, and who publicly criticize Pope John Paul II and his initiatives in its regard.⁷⁷

Cardinal Ratzinger alludes to this phenomenon in *A New Song for the Lord*. He quotes a colleague from Munster, a liturgical scholar, who expresses mistaken views regarding the role of the faithful at Mass and the singing of the *Sanctus*:

With all due respect for the eminent liturgist, his opinion shows that even experts can be wide of the mark. First of all, *mistrust is always in order when a large part of the living history* [i.e. tradition] *has to be thrown onto the garbage dump of discarded misunderstandings. This is all the more true of Christian liturgy, which lives from the continuity and inner unity of the history of religious prayer.* ...In fact, the assertion [of the

⁷⁶ Louis Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1956), 14.

⁷⁷ An example of this sort may be seen in an article written by Archbishop Rembert Weakland entitled "Liturgical Renewal: Two Latin Rites?" in *America*, Vol. 176, No. 20, June 7-14, 1997, 12. The Archbishop makes the astonishing claim that "what totally derailed the liturgical renewal was the decision of John Paul II...to grant...the indult that allowed the Tridentine usage to flourish again." It can hardly be said that the so-called "Tridentine usage" is *flourishing* since relatively few bishops cooperate fully with the Pope's directives in the matter. Archbishop Weakland continues a polemic by asserting, "since that time [when the Pope permitted once again public practice of the older usage] the liturgical renewal in the United States has been in disarray ...the liturgical climate in the United States has changed totally." To maintain that because the classic Roman liturgy is celebrated publicly in the United States each Sunday in about 100 places "the liturgical climate...has changed totally" is certainly an exaggeration. More seriously, it publicly impugns the Pope's pastoral judgment in the matter. Mr. Michael Davies, president of *Una Voce International*, an organization working towards a living preservation of the classic Roman liturgy since 1970, has rebutted this article in a number of publications. Cardinal Ratzinger has publicly thanked Mr. Davies for the role *Una Voce* has been playing in helping to restore a "liturgical consciousness" to the Church. (For further discussion of this article see "Weakland: a New Battle", *Inside the Vatican*, August 1997, 16-19. *ITV* examines Archbishop Weakland's statements in *America* relative to the whole liturgical question in the Church today.)

liturgical expert referred to] that the acclamatory character can be attended to only by the congregation is completely unfounded.⁷⁸ [emphasis added]

In reference to White's claims concerning two liturgical movements it should be noted that Fr. Bouyer wrote *Liturgy and Life* in the 1950's when, according to the eminent liturgical scholar, the monastic successors to Dom Gueranger had already pushed on and "discovered the true essence of the liturgy". This they managed to do while using the historical Roman liturgy and its codified books with Latin, chant, ancient ceremony *and popular participation* – all without the help of the "reformist and parish liturgical movement" which did not yet exist. If such was the case, one is led to wonder what different objective was to be accomplished by a successive liturgical movement?

White's "diocesan priests and considerable number of lay people who dreamed of things that the first liturgical movement never dared" are, in fact, among those who directed liturgical reform into another sphere altogether. In every sense they *are* a "new personnel" with "different objectives". They are precisely those referred to by Cardinal Ratzinger when he speaks of,

...this decision-making capacity [regarding changing the liturgy] is not recognized as belonging to specialists or central authority, but that in the end every "community" wants to be given its own liturgy. But when the liturgy is something that everyone makes by himself, then it no longer gives us that which is its true quality: an encounter with mystery, which is not our product, but the origin and source of our life. Dramatically urgent for the life of the Church is a renewal of the liturgical conscience, a liturgical reconciliation, that turns to knowing again the unity of the history of the liturgy, and understands Vatican II not as a rupture but as a moment in its development.⁷⁹

That sort of consciousness could arise from an organic continuation and further unfolding of what White calls the "early" liturgical movement and *not* the one promoted by "diocesan priests and considerable number of lay people who dream of things the first liturgical movement never dared". The early participants "didn't dare" because the objective of such daring is removed from a

⁷⁸ Ratzinger, *A New Song for the Lord*, 141. The erroneous idea expressed by the liturgist is fundamental to why authentic church music has largely disappeared from use in church. Since parts of the liturgy are acclamations of the assembled faithful, so the theory goes, unless they can each personally sing them they are no longer their own acclamations. According to the citation this opinion caused the liturgical expert to conclude, "...this not only leads to compelling conclusions for new musical settings, but also results in vetoes for most of the Gregorian and for all the polyphonic versions since they exclude the people from singing and do not take the character of acclamation into account." Thus almost the entire musical tradition of the West must be "thrown onto the garbage dump of discarded misunderstandings." In other words the Catholic Church's tradition has been mistaken in this area and liturgical music must start again from ground zero.

⁷⁹ Ratzinger, *La Mia Vita*, 112.

right understanding of worship. In eulogizing the late liturgical scholar, Monsignor Klaus Gamber, Cardinal Ratzinger noted that,

...what is needed in the Church today is a new liturgical movement...[which seeks to] ...rediscover the living center, of penetrating into the tissue ... of the liturgy itself, into its concrete realization, so that its accomplishment derive from its own substance. The liturgical reform, in its concrete realization, has distanced itself more and more from this origin. The result has not been an animation but a devastation.⁸⁰

The Cardinal goes on to say that Monsignor Gamber should be a “father” to such a new movement, one that would reflect the Council’s right intentions (which Gamber embraced), and a continuation of the movement White identifies as generally having ended with *Mediator Dei*.

On November 20, 1997, in marking the fiftieth anniversary of Pope Pius XII’s publication of that encyclical, Pope John Paul II publicly stressed the importance of the landmark document:

With admirable balance and pastoral foresight, it [*Mediator Dei*] makes the most of the innovative suggestions of the liturgical movement, moderates excesses and describes the Church’s public worship with profound and theological insight... The Second Vatican Council, in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy and its other documents, amply cites *Mediator Dei* and completes its doctrinal and pastoral plan... I give thanks to God with you for this *significant intervention* by my venerable predecessor, *which still retains its importance and timeliness today*. May *authentic renewal* further the work of the new evangelization.⁸¹ [emphasis added]

There can only be continuity, not rupture, between the authentic liturgical movement represented by *Mediator Dei* and the liturgical movement envisioned by the Council. Professor White certainly *does* describe a reality, however: the breach between the *principles* of *Mediator Dei* and the *praxis* of the actual reform following the Council. This is manifest nowhere more strikingly than by comparing a condemnation of *Mediator Dei* and the actual state of affairs in the Roman Rite today:

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 straight path were he to wish the altar restored to its primitive table form; were he to want black excluded as a color for the 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

⁸⁰ Ratzinger, *Preface* in Gamber, *La Reforme Liturgique en Question*, 6.

⁸¹ John Paul II, “*Mediator Dei*: A Milestone in Liturgical Reform”, *L’Osservatore Romano* (English Edition), No. 48, 26 November 1997, 1.

His cruel sufferings; and lastly were he to disdain and reject polyphonic music or singing in parts even where it conforms to regulations issued by the Holy See.⁸²

Upon reading this *significant, timely moderation of excess* (as Pope John Paul II described it in November 1997) and comparing it to the norms prevailing in Roman churches throughout the world today, it is not hard to see that Professor White's claim that pre- and post-Vatican II liturgical policy certainly has *not* been the same. There has been a break, while Professor White assures us that the personnel and objectives of the two policies have been different (the second having been carried out with "vehemence"). The different results are there for all to see.

The fact is materially true. But remaining no less true is that what was condemned as erroneous ("straying from the straight path") by papal magisterium – a condemnation grounded in sound principles of liturgy, theology, history, and human psychology – does not become true and laudable simply because the condemned errors have gained widespread acceptance. Such an understanding would make an absurdity of papal magisterium: it certainly does not develop organically by obvious, explicit contradiction. Nor can any claim be made to legitimize such practices on the pretext that they have now become *custom* since custom itself can only become law when it conforms to sound principles of faith and order. There needs to be a reconciliation not only of liturgical principles, but *a reconciliation of practice with right principles*.

Had there been obedience to the Council's directives for a true and deepened understanding of the liturgical heritage of the Roman Church and an actual promotion of its preservation and restoration, there would not have ensued the process by which the things condemned in this encyclical – namely the disappearance of black as a liturgical color, the energetic house-cleaning of statues and images, the widespread emergence of "resurrection" crucifixes (especially in churches where such images are completely out of place), the dissolution of church choirs and music programs, the ruinous neglect or outright destruction of pipe organs, and a general tidal wave of cultural self-destruction within the ancillary services to the Roman liturgy – came to be the *norm* in the Roman Rite. It will take decades, if not centuries, to redevelop this magnificent, brilliantly rich cultural patrimony unique to *Roman Catholicism, Western Christianity*. After the saints, it is the Church's greatest contribution to all humanity.

⁸² *Mediator Dei*, 62.

As for altars “being restored to their primitive table form”, Cardinal Ratzinger remarks,

Not only had the awareness of the liturgy’s cosmic orientation been lost, but there was also little understanding of the significance of the image of the cross as a point of reference for the Christian liturgy. Hence the eastward orientation of the celebration became meaningless, and people could begin to speak of the priest celebrating Mass ‘facing the wall’ or imagine that he was celebrating toward the tabernacle. This misunderstanding alone can explain the *sweeping triumph of the new celebration facing the people, a change which has taken place without any mandate (and perhaps for this very reason!). All this would have been inconceivable if it had not been preceded by a prior loss of meaning from within.*⁸³ [emphasis added]

Mass “facing the people” is by far the most radical change in the Roman liturgy.⁸⁴ More than any other it has effected a deep psychological shift in the understanding of the purpose of worship and its impact on its participants, moving almost everything from a *theocentric* to an *anthropocentric* focus. As was discussed above, the former is quite understandably insisted upon by Pius XII in *Mediator Dei*: “Let everything be theocentric...if we really wish to direct everything to the glory of God...”⁸⁵ Dietrich von Hildebrand points this out in his classic work *Liturgy and Personality*:

...the Mass as a whole is the supreme fulfillment of adoration and love which gives itself and sacrifices itself completely. The sacrificial love of the God-man, the gift of Himself to the heavenly Father, is the primal theocentric attitude [of the liturgy]. And to the extent that a man is inwardly formed through participation in the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, all egocentric deviation...is bound to disappear. The spirit which breathes in the holy Mass is penetrated with the fundamental fact that the response of adoring and atoning love is due to God’s endless majesty and holiness.⁸⁶

In rejecting the right principles articulated in *Mediator Dei*, its directive wisdom has been eliminated as well. With enthusiasm for the very thing *Mediator Dei* proscribes, the nearly universal adoption of Mass celebrated so that the priest can face the congregation has led to the following understanding according to Cardinal Ratzinger:

The general view [regarding this new practice] is totally determined by the strongly felt community character of the eucharistic celebration, in which the priest and people face each other in a dialog relationship. This does express *one* aspect of the eucharist. But the danger

⁸³ Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, 142.

⁸⁴ Cf. Gamber, *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy*, “Celebrating Mass *Versus Populum*: Liturgical and Sociological Aspects”, 78-89; and “Part II: On the Building of Churches and Facing East in Prayer”, 117-184.

⁸⁵ *Mediator Dei*, 33.

⁸⁶ Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Liturgy and Personality* (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1960), 51.

is that it can make the congregation into a closed circle which is no longer aware of the explosive Trinitarian dynamism which gives the eucharist its greatness.⁸⁷

Incredibly, the almost universal adoption of a practice prescribed neither by Conciliar directive nor any rubric in the typical edition of the reformed *Missale Romanum* is rooted in ignorance of the liturgical, cosmological, eschatological and psychological meanings of its historical antecedent – all freely conceded by the Cardinal. The one suggested meaning for its adoption is entirely *secondary* to the intrinsic nature of liturgical action, and, in virtue of its constitutive dynamic, the practice can not help *but* withdraw attention from the theocentricity of worship, its *primary* function.

The traditional eastward position of the celebrant (*orientation*) has from the *very inception of Christianity itself* indicated the *theocentric* and *eschatological* dimensions of the Eucharistic Sacrifice⁸⁸ accomplished by *ritual action* and not by *words*. It also serves to direct priest and faithful *together* towards the Holy Cross, instrument of salvation whose bloody sacrifice God deigns to bring once again, in an unbloody and sacramental manner, into present time and space on the altar of their worship. Clearly the overriding consideration as Cardinal Ratzinger says is that,

The liturgy is the Thrice Holy God coming among us, it is the burning bush, it is the covenant of God with man in Jesus Christ who died and rose again. The grandeur of the liturgy is not based upon the fact that it provides an interesting pastime; it consists rather in the act of the Wholly Other, Whom we are not capable of summoning, in making Himself tangible. He comes because He wishes to. In other words, the essential thing in the liturgy is the mystery which is accomplished in the communal rite of the Church; everything else diminishes it. The faithful are deeply affected by this and feel cheated when the mystery is transformed into distraction, when the principal actor in the liturgy is not the living God but the priest or liturgical animator.⁸⁹

This primary and central function of the eucharistic liturgy has been served at all times, in all places, and in every rite by the traditional *orientation* of the people, priest, altar and cross in a single, telescopic, cosmological ordering. This is entirely the case, notwithstanding popular and faulty archeological interpretations against its *absolutely universal* practice from the time of the

⁸⁷ Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, 142.

⁸⁸ St. John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodoxa*, IV, 12. “Waiting for Him, we adore Him facing East. *This is an unrecorded tradition passed down to us from the Apostles.*” [emphasis added] Quoted in Gamber, *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy*, 84.

⁸⁹ Ratzinger, “Speech to the Bishops of Chile”, 8.

Apostles and unbroken (in Catholicism) until the second decade of the present century.⁹⁰

Fundamental to its liturgical significance is that this *orientation* is an harmonious expression of human psychology and the natural ordering of all the hierarchical values operative in worship.⁹¹

No less important to note is the fact that in the historical forms of liturgical celebration the communal element has never been absent in any rite of the Church. Inducing the congregation to respond and sing does not require the wholesale reordering of ancient rites themselves. This is obvious at a glance with a typical Sunday Liturgy in any Ukrainian Catholic parish today. As said before, integrating the faithful into the liturgical enactment requires priests who are knowledgeable and interested enough in their patrimony to actually educate the faithful to carry out their proper role in it. This had been taught and well on the road to realization in the Roman Rite for more than a hundred years. It was promoted by every Pope during this century in conjunction with the ancient, received forms of the liturgy. It was given further impetus by Pius XII and Vatican II. Despite the near universal disappearance of Latin, the faithful *still* do not sing or respond in many instances.

This last phenomenon has nothing to do with the liturgy itself, whether it be a question of language, music, or ceremony. It is a problem colored by the obstacles to faith imposed by a secular world thoroughly imbued with the kind of “progress, liberalism and modern civilization” so antithetical to Christian religion.

Modern man, from whom Catholics are becoming less distinguishable, is disinterested in a truly theocentric, historical, incarnational, biblical worship that consciously strives to imitate the celestial liturgy of the blessed in Heaven. Many who claim to be believers no longer embrace the full deposit of revealed religion, finding not a few of its truths naïve by the more worldly standards

⁹⁰ Gamber, *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy*, 138. “We can show with certainty that there has never been, neither in the Eastern nor the Western Church, a celebration *versus populum* (facing the people); rather the direction of prayer has always been towards the East, *conversi ad Dominum* (turned toward the Lord).”

⁹¹ It is also significant that through the eastward celebration of the classic rites of the Church the personality of the celebrant disappears from public view as is suitable to the role of *alter Christus*. This is especially true when the priest conducts himself in an unhurried manner, carrying out his actions sensitively, submissive to the rubrics and ethos of the rite in use. The abuse of this last principle is at the root of much hostility directed to the older Latin liturgy. The remembrance of some priest’s hurried inattentiveness or outright abusive treatment of the former liturgical directives is *often* confused with what is intrinsic to the rite itself. An entire liturgical patrimony can hardly be reasonably dismissed on the grounds that it was ignorantly abused. Such abuses revealed the “loss of meaning from within” that had already been ingrained into the Latin clergy long before the post-conciliar changes took place. They indicate loss of a *cosmological* understanding of what liturgy is in the first place. That was replaced long ago by a post-scholastic minimalism that contented itself with sacramental “validity” and its “effects”. This is what the authentic liturgical movement sought to redress. (cf. Gamber, 12.)

of rationalist skepticism. Increasingly suffocated by materialism, many are too bored by the idea of religion to give its purpose – and supernatural promises – much thought, let alone an operative credence. Hence the “staleness” in regard to the faith that Cardinal Ratzinger speaks of in *Salt of the Earth*.

Community, in the Christian sense of the term, is a secondary derivative of the Catholic experience of God in the context of authentic worship. To tailor the liturgy in an attempt to heighten a sense of community is not the essential function of the liturgy in the first place, nor is it Catholic history’s way, nor does it work as *worship*. The effect of worship is *God’s movement towards His people*, and not the *movement of people towards each other*. With reaching for the *secondary* effect now in place as a broadly directive operative in the accomplishment of liturgical activity, the net result felt by many is increasingly the one expressed by Joe Coy in a recent article in *The Furrow*:

Church services at present can be very sterile. We seem to have abandoned some of the best Catholic rituals and replaced them with the most anemic Protestant ones. The appeal is too rational and literary – there is little scope for the feelings and emotions, nothing to lift us beyond ourselves – not enough color, light, music, sound and scent, not enough atmosphere...⁹²

That was written in January 1998. The reason modern worship is perceived as sterile or accused of a kind of Protestant “anemia” is that the liturgy has increasingly become conceived as Cardinal Ratzinger says,

...etsi Deus non daretur – as if it were no longer important whether God were there in it and if He speaks to us... Then the community celebrates only itself, without which [faith, Christ, and the Church] it’s not worth the effort. And, given that the community in itself does not have subsistence, but as to unity has its origin in faith through the Lord Himself, it becomes inevitable in these conditions that there arrives a dissolution into parts of every sort, at factional counterpoints in a Church that lacerates itself.⁹³

The psychological perception of a divine presence and action in the liturgy derives, in part, from the numinous quality of the externals in which this central mystery and reality of grace is presented to the human faculties in combination with the rational sense of its texts, the whole being an outward context within which God comes and touches His people. This is why external forms –

⁹² Joe Coy, “A View From the Pew”, *The Furrow*, Vol. 49, No. 1, January 1998, 34.

⁹³ Ratzinger, *La Mia Vita*, 113.

especially ritual accouterment (but textual content as well) – can not just be dismissed as “wearisome” or “useless repetitions”. They are indispensable parts of Christian worship that speak to the physiological and psychological needs of the human person. They have been largely swept away and in their absence the new reforms are perceived as “anemic”. To quote Gamber, it is an indication that the liturgy is “now breathing the thin air of Calvinistic sterility.”⁹⁴ That this observation also comes from outside conservative camps is obvious from the rest of Coy’s article.

These external forms are necessary to worship as quite naturally understood in light of a Christian anthropology. Since the liturgy is a love song to the Lord sung by human voices, the internal sense is “thickened” and “incremented by style”, to use the ideas of Aidan Kavanagh. The present is not an age of art and sensitive expression, and therefore it is not surprising that the reforms have failed in this crucially important area. Dietrich von Hildebrand comments on this in his book, *The Devastated Vineyard*:

The new liturgy was not formed by saints, *homines religiosi*, and artistically gifted men, but has been worked out by so-called experts, who are not at all aware that in our time there is a lack of talent for such things. Today is a time of incredible talent for technology and medical research, but not for the organic shaping and expression of the religious world. We live in a world without poetry, and this means that one should approach the treasures handed on from more fortunate times with twice as much reverence, and not with the illusion that we can do it better ourselves.⁹⁵

In considering, then, what actually transpired to the liturgy during the years after the Council, it can not be surprising that a real resistance developed against the trends. The transformation in worship was too vast and incomprehensible for many. The contrast between the old and new was much fresher at that time than now – the sharp differences dimming with a fading memory in most regarding the former. This resistance was discussed with Cardinal Ratzinger in his 1981 book, *The Feast of Faith*:

Interviewer: ...the so-called “conservatives” who form this opposition [to the changes] feel they have been betrayed and put to the wrong. Nor is this a wholly subjective matter. For instance, in 1947 we had *Mediator Dei*, the encyclical of Pius XII, and then, not twenty years later, came the reform. In other words, in twenty years a silent landslide took place, without the slightest assurance being given to those involved, the mass of traditional believers. I find it hard to understand how the Church could have so failed to carry out her

⁹⁴ Gamber, *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy*, 5.

⁹⁵ Dietrich von Hildebrand, *The Devastated Vineyard*, trans. John Crosby and Fred Teichert (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973), 70.

pastoral responsibilities toward those under her care, leaving the believers of the old school almost defenseless against the tide of new thought and values. ...Now, overnight, all this was no longer supposed to be true. I am not so much interested in what is right or wrong here, the old belief or the new, but I do want to point out the situation as it appears in the minds of many of the faithful.

Cardinal Ratzinger: First of all I must take up the distinction you have just made between the “old belief” and “the new”. I must emphatically deny such a distinction. The Council has not created any new matter for belief, let alone replaced an old belief with a new one... All the same I must admit that in the wake of the Council a lot of things happened far too quickly and abruptly, with the result that many of the faithful could not see the inner continuity with what had gone on before. In part it is simply a fact that the Council was pushed to the side. For instance, it had said that the language of the Latin Rite was to remain Latin, although suitable scope was to be given to the vernacular. Today we might ask: *Is there a Latin Rite at all any more?* Certainly there is no awareness of it...⁹⁶

Opposition derived from the evident rift between the Council’s intentions and the actual reforms as Catholics experienced them. The Cardinal’s 1981 question whether there even *is* a Roman Rite any more is not hyperbole. It had already been answered in 1976 by an important voice in the reform as will be examined shortly.

Since the faithful were unprepared and the impression was given that everything could change and therefore did, some felt utterly defenseless against the program and the “vehemence” which characterized its advocates. Psychologically it can not be surprising that many took shelter in the old liturgy. The issue had moved well beyond erudition and juridical competence, and become something academics failed to anticipate. The changes hurt ordinary people in their daily lives.⁹⁷

Many of the faithful perceived the process as an open attack on their personal religious convictions. They were bewildered that it was coming from the hierarchy but their sense of faith and conscience was sufficient to drive them beyond this conundrum especially as it affected *the religious formation of their children*. They did not feel that the purpose of Catholic worship is to produce animated, vocal, group interchanges, but rather active interior union of the soul with the

⁹⁶ Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, 83, 84.

⁹⁷ For an interesting parallel between the strategic effects of those effecting the liturgical reforms and that of the intellectual classes in civil universities during the same period, see Robert Bork, *Slouching Towards Gomorrah: Modern Liberalism and American Decline* (New York: Regan Books, 1996), 83, 84. Cardinal Ratzinger refers to the liturgical reformers as having the “armchair strategy of academics, drawing up things on paper” (*Feast of Faith*, 81) while Professor Bork comments on academics and their substantive lack of contact with the real world. The two observations reveal a common thread concerning utopic conceptions and their disruptive unfolding in the lives of ordinary persons.

action of the priest together comprising the sacred action of faith. This, in its turn, lays the foundation for catechesis and moral formation of the young. Many – including priests and bishops – simply did not (and still do not) possess an adequate knowledge of the liturgy and its authentic principles to adequately sort out the whole state of affairs. It must be said in their favor that normal Catholic life should not require that everyone become a liturgical scholar to survive participation in the Church’s central life – its worship, and the faith that flows from it.

For some these conditions proved unendurable. It became impossible to perceive the continuity between an eastward-facing Latin liturgy characterized by a sober, numinous ensemble of ancient symbols, gestures, and other-worldly music and a vernacular one celebrated facing the congregation characterized by simple informality, frequent vocalization, personal contacts between the worshippers, and music often like that heard on popular radio. It was, simply put, a phenomenological about-face. When the latter model was accompanied by questionable teachings and radical departures even from the new norms, the situation was made worse. Especially in the face of religious formation of people’s children these conditions – left uncorrected – made for a volatile mix.

For many the condition developed to a point that history itself amply demonstrates no compromise would occur. In the domain of personal religion the most serious believers will hold to their convictions to the point of martyrdom, even if wrong. The post-conciliar era witnessed the emergence of just such an environment for some. After years of impasse and increased hardening on the side of some of those in the most determined resistance movements, the situation ended with the schism of 1988. Though numerically small (encompassing probably 100,000 people worldwide) it is indicative of a wider malaise that still exists. There is an infidelity to the Council’s true teaching. Pope John Paul calls increasingly for a return to the authentic sense of the Council’s documents while Cardinal Ratzinger stresses the need for manifesting the continuity intended between its vision for reform and the full fabric of the Church’s unbroken tradition.

Despite the various deficiencies mercilessly described by Fr. Bouyer in *Life and Liturgy* as having advanced from the monks of the “first liturgical movement”⁹⁸, he does add a caveat that

⁹⁸ For example, when speaking of the efforts of Maria-Laach (*Liturgy and Life*, 20) and comparing them to the “sham Gothic of the last century”, Fr. Bouyer states, “these works are the most outstanding blunders produced by any Christian aesthetics. And the pity is they are not blunders by reason of a defective technique, but blunders

would ring especially true in the aftermath of the Council:

It is certainly one thing to single out for recognition a period in the history of the Church when theology, Christian art, and the daily life of the Church all gave clear and full testimony to the essential nature of Christianity; and it is quite another thing to try to remodel the external practices of the Church of today according to the external aspects of the same period. We must then, take every measure to avoid this fatal mistake...⁹⁹

In 1956, his thinking reflected *Mediator Dei's* sound condemnation of antiquarianism, and he wrote clearly against the error of attempting a liturgical reconstruction of some idealized period. It was for this reason that he criticized the early monastic efforts. By 1975 he had the following to say about the actual state of affairs:

The Catholic liturgy has been overthrown under the pretext of rendering it more acceptable to the secularized masses. But in reality to conform it with the buffooneries that the religious orders were induced to impose, whether they liked it or not, upon the other clergy. We don't have to wait for the result: a sudden decline in religious practice, varying between twenty and forty percent among those who were practicing Catholics...those who weren't have not displayed even a trace of interest in this pseudo-missionary liturgy, particularly the

committed

solemnly and committed on principle. Nothing could be more of an abortion, dead at the moment of its birth, than this soulless and uninspired false byzantinism." Fr. Bouyer did not spare the actual post-Conciliar reform the same acid criticism once he had determined it too was not what he thought authentic liturgical expression should be. This reference, and others like it, demonstrate something of that surety of the "liturgical expert" which can render dialog with them less than fruitful.

The "sham" in the gothic and byzantine styled churches built over the last 100 years pales by comparison with the soulless architecture employed in much modern church architecture today. Its "inspiration" is authentic only in the sense that it is actually contemporary with the *time* of today's Church. It mimics the style of godless architecture, godlessness being the underpinning of the whole of modern art. Its minimalism denies the *need planted by God in the human person* for outward expression of his interior, noble dispositions. This movement was already well afoot prior to the "later liturgical movement." (For an insight into this subject see James White, *Roman Catholic Worship*, 75. Quoted are some 1938 seminal concepts of the German church architect Rudolph Schwarz: "We must begin anew and our beginning must be genuine. All that is necessary is a large, well proportioned room ...[and] a table ... that is all." The Catholic Church has lived to see this idea reduced to widespread practice in violation of its teaching on the subject.)

Stark emptiness is a concomitant to atheist art and architecture which arose in the 1920s and 1930s, particularly in Germany. Later it became a general movement reaching its nadir in the pseudo philosophy and productions of academia, the art world, and the modern cities and churches of the 1960s and 1970s. It is radically unsuited to the milieu of worship because neither God nor His will regarding the nature of man plays a role in its inspiration. It is not a criminal "romanticism" to build churches in the styles of times when human nature was respected and its works were sympathetic to the Christian cosmology. In any case, an historical worship carried out in such buildings necessarily brings forth the totality of the Church – the whole of its spirituality, history and artistic expression. What would be objectionable would be to effect permanently, on principle and in practice, a total recreation of a particular period piece without any living context for it. On this point, upheld by *Mediator Dei*, Fr. Bouyer would agree.

⁹⁹ Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, 21.

young whom they had deluded themselves into thinking they would win over with their clowning.¹⁰⁰

Still expressing his pique about monks and the liturgy and still no less sure of his opinion, Fr. Bouyer clearly did not subscribe to what had happened to the liturgy.

Franker still is Fr. Joseph Gelineau, S.J., noted liturgical *peritus* to the Council and member of Study Group 10, the inner core of Consilium. In his 1976 book, *Demain La Liturgie*, he made exceptionally clear and revealing observations about the direction the reform had actually taken. There is little doubt as to where the idea has come that the Council occasioned a break in the tradition. He had already answered Cardinal Ratzinger's question, "Is there a Roman Rite?"

And then whole walls crumbled. The most spectacular was that of the Latin language to which was tied the chant repertoire, and on which depended in its turn the temporal unfolding (words, sound, ceremonial, sight) of the service, the whole thing forming the worldwide image of a rite. In order that no one be mistaken: to translate is not to say the same thing with other, equivalent words. It is to change the form. However, the liturgy is not only an information or a teaching [session] in which the only important thing is the [rational] content. *It is a symbolic action mediated by signifying "forms." If the forms change, the rite changes. If one element is changed, the whole thing signified is modified.* Let those who, like me, have known and celebrated the Solemn High Mass in Latin and Gregorian chant remember, if they can. Let them compare it to the actual liturgy that followed Vatican II. *Not only the words, melodies and certain gestures are different. In truth, it is another liturgy of the Mass. It must be said without ambiguity: the Roman Rite such as we have known it no longer exists. It is destroyed.* Some walls of the first edifice have fallen while others have changed aspect to the point that it appears today either as a ruin or as the partial substructure of another edifice.¹⁰¹ [emphasis added]

Part of this citation is an excellent and comprehensive explanation of the interrelationship

¹⁰⁰ Louis Bouyer, *Religieux et Clercs Contre Dieu* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1975), 12.

¹⁰¹ Joseph Gelineau, *Demain la Liturgie: Essai sur l'Évolution des Asemblées Chretiennes* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1976), 10. "Alors des pans entiers s'écroulent. Le plus spectaculaire est celui de la langue latine, à laquelle était lié le répertoire du chant, duquel dépendait à son tour le déroulement temporel (verbal, sonore, cérémonial, visuel) d'un office, le tout formant l'image globale d'un rite. Qu'on ne s'y trompe pas: traduire n'est pas dire la même chose avec d'autres mots équivalents. C'est changer la forme. Or la liturgie n'est pas seulement une information ou un enseignement dont seuls important les contenus. Elle est une action symbolique moyennant des "formes" significatives. Si les formes changent, le rite change. Si un element est changé, la totalité signifiante est modifiée. Que ceux qui ont encore connu et célébré comme moi la grande-messe chantée en Latin et en grégorien se souviennent, s'ils le peuvent. Qu'ils lui comparent la messe actuelle d'après Vatican II. Non seulement les mots, les mélodies et certains gestes sont autres. En vérité, c'est une autre liturgie de la messe. Il faut le dire sans ambages: le rite romain tel que nous l'avons connu n'existe plus. Il est détruit. Des murs de l'édifice premier sont tombés tandis que d'autres ont changé d'aspect, au point que celui-ci apparaît aujourd'hui soit comme une ruine, soit comme la substructure partielle d'un autre édifice." (cf. explanatory note in ¹⁰²)

of the elements in worship. But here also may be found an explanation as to why the vernacular liturgies are not straight-forward translations of the Latin typical edition of the new Roman Missal.

In the English edition of Fr. Gelineau's book the phrase, *Il est détruit* (It is destroyed) has been rendered, "It has gone", something that Gelineau did *not* say.¹⁰² Perhaps the Paulist Press felt its English-speaking clientele unprepared for the candor of one of the principal architects of the new liturgy. At any rate, Fr. Gelineau was frank enough to state the facts in plain French and *le dire sans ambages: le rite romain tel que nous l'avons connu n'existe plus. Il est détruit.*¹⁰³ This phrase was taken up worldwide by those angry with the changes. It undeniably reflects that some on the commission for the implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy had a program well removed from the Council Fathers' intentions. It is clear from his book that Fr. Gelineau thought the ruin a positive thing.

No less revealing are some principles expressed by Fr. Annibale Bugnini who served as Secretary to the president of Consilium. On March 3, 1965, in *L'Osservatore Romano* he stated that Consilium's task was to remove from the Roman Liturgy "everything that could constitute the slightest risk of a stumbling block or a source of displeasure to our Separated Brethren." This principle, if carried to its logical conclusion, would mean the abolition from the Roman liturgy of anything specifically different from a Protestant theology of the eucharist.

Fr. Carlo Braga, assistant to Fr. Annibale Bugnini, made the following statement in *Ephemerides Liturgicae* in 1970:

Revising the pre-existing text becomes more delicate when faced with the need to update content or language, and when all this affects not only form, but also doctrinal reality. This [revision] is called for in the light of new human values, considered in relation to and as a way to supernatural goods. ...ecumenical requirements dictated appropriate revisions in language. Expressions recalling positions or struggles of the past are no longer in harmony

¹⁰² Joseph Gelineau, *The Liturgy Today and Tomorrow*, trans. Dinah Livingstone (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 11. Is this not a perfect example of Fr. Gelineau's observation "to translate is not the same as saying the same thing with different words"? Mistranslating may well be a disingenuous way of saying something *other* than what the original text actually says. Due to the inaccuracy of this English rendition of Fr. Gelineau's book, I have provided the English equivalent for the citations taken from the French original. In this way, *precisely* what was said in clear French will be understood from an equally clear English. This, in point of fact, is what translating is *supposed* to accomplish.

¹⁰³ From the completely opposite end of the spectrum Mgr. Klaus Gamber says the same thing in a subtler language: "The publication of the *Ordo Missae* of 1969, however, created a new liturgical rite. In other words, the traditional liturgical rite had not simply been revised as the Council had intended. Rather, it had been completely abolished, and a couple of years later, the traditional liturgical rite was, in fact, forbidden." (Cf. Gamber, *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy*, 33.)

with the Church's new positions. An entirely new foundation of eucharistic theology has superseded devotional points of view or a particular way of venerating and invoking the saints. Retouching the text, moreover, was deemed necessary to bring to light new values and new perspectives.¹⁰⁴

Fr. Gelineau informed the public "in order that no one be mistaken" that translating "is not to say the same thing with other, equivalent words," and that the Roman liturgical patrimony the Council wished fostered and restored would come to be "it must be stated without ambiguity... destroyed." A reason given by the secretary of Consilium for instigating many of the non-translations – i.e. mutations of the traditional texts – was the removal from them of "everything that could constitute the slightest risk of a stumbling block or source of displeasure" to Christians who neither possess the Catholic faith nor are practicing members of the Church. His assistant added that the alterations were intended to "update" and reflect "new human values" drawn, unavoidably, within a time-frame wherein the values of traditional Christianity were overshadowed by a euphoria for change touching absolutely everything in the life of the Church. All these statements were published by key figures in Consilium. They were the ones directly responsible for carrying out the actual changes in the typical edition of the new Roman liturgy.

In his book *Roman Catholic Worship: Trent To Today*, Professor White quite baldly states another position – what he feels was the dominant influence of the "second liturgical movement":

One cannot deny that the second liturgical movement adopted essentially a Protestant agenda for worship. ...the second liturgical movement caught fire in primarily those countries like the United States and Germany where there was a large Protestant majority. ...The leaders often had close Protestant contacts. Even though the movement had shed its skin of being a monastic fad, it was still suspect in many quarters. Not the least objection was that so many of the things being advocated sounded definitely Protestant and were in common practice [in the Protestant church] right down the street [from the Catholic church] in every American town. Nevertheless the conspirators [sic] persevered... [With the 1958 formation of a Bishops' Commission on the Liturgical Apostolate] the church's [sic] most important activity was finally to be bureaucratized on a national level.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Carlo Braga, "Il *Proprium de Sanctis*", *Ephemerides Liturgicae*, No. 84, 1970, 419.

¹⁰⁵ White, 101. The absolute veracity of Professor White's statement is not the subject of the present discourse. It does, however, indicate a widespread trend in *perception*. Since this professor of liturgics and popular author has said that the liturgical reform actually in place adopted "essentially a Protestant agenda for worship" it does well to recall that *essence* refers to *nature*, or the *ontological first principle* in a thing's being. Protestantism has as its first principle that same notion of independence, liberty, and private judgment found throughout all of society today. Therefore an "essentially Protestant agenda for worship" would be underpinned by the same principle as modern, secular society. At the absolute heart of Protestant independence from the Church of Christ is a denial of God Who Reveals; following

The following observation is made by the liturgical scholar, Msgr. Klaus Gamber, so highly esteemed by Cardinal Ratzinger:

Much more radical than any liturgical changes introduced by Luther, at least as far as the rite was concerned, was the reorganization of our own liturgy – above all, the fundamental changes that were made in the liturgy of the Mass. It also demonstrated much less understanding for the emotional ties the faithful had to the traditional liturgical rite. ...One thing is certain: the new liberal theology was a major force behind the liturgical reforms.¹⁰⁶

One of the problems evident in the Church and society at large in the post-conciliar era is an exaggerated freedom that is difficult to harmonize with the ascetic requirements of Christian conversion. It is the result of false notions regarding human liberty and often represents an erosion of fundamental truths and practices necessary to the pursuit of authentic Christian religion and spirituality in those who hold them.¹⁰⁷

These truths and practices are connexes of the doctrine of original sin. Because of its effects the new man born in Christ must acquire with the help of grace, first, the virtue of *humility* in his will, and then the wider virtue of *temperance* in the flesh that strengthens the will in its regard. In the exercise of both there must be a submission to something *other than self*. There must be a genuine submission to God in Christ through which the individual *imitates His virtues* and *joins his sacrifices to the expiatory sacrifice of Jesus' passion and death*. This is Christian asceticism and it is concomitant to everything in the Christian life and experience.

This practice is carried out ecclesially by obedience to tradition, and *that* (tradition in its fullest sense) is the very foundation of everything in Catholic Christianity. Such obedience derives, of course, from the theological virtues of hope, faith and charity. For this reason any alteration of liturgical forms that would occasion an erosion of faith – whether deliberately or unwittingly – would have to be considered counterproductive to the purpose of Catholic worship. Since *tradition*

shortly upon that is the rejection of a Catholic understanding of the eucharistic *mysterion*. There will never be a “new position” in the Church that alters the dogmatic canons of Trent regarding the Catholic understanding of this Mystery. The essence of Protestant worship rests on the principle of private judgment, dissent from the Catholic tradition of revelation and reduces to *act* the concept that the *individual* is the sole arbiter of truth. In effect he himself assumes the place of God in his life and therefore submits neither to the true God, nor His Church, nor tradition, nor law. It is impossible that the new liturgy itself is “essentially” Protestant although elements within the actual state of affairs have startling elements in common with Protestant ideas and forms.

¹⁰⁶ Gamber, *Reform of the Roman Liturgy*, 43, 44.

¹⁰⁷ Ratzinger, *Ratzinger Report*, 36. “...on the part of many Catholics in recent years there has been an unrestrained and unfiltered opening to the world, that is to say, to the dominant modern mentality, which at the same

is the foundation of Christian religion, the liturgy must conform to it. Ecclesial traditions that include elements in excess of a thousand years duration – and some older still – are not manifest blunders of history. They are they work of the Holy Spirit and must be respected.¹⁰⁸

The ascetic self-surrender to Christ – *metanoia*, an act deriving from the love relationship with God – is what effects the full Christological sense of new life in the Lord. This is the essential factor operative in *obedience*, that outward manifestation of self-denial that conforms one's behavior to the laws of God, and to the sources of religion. Both elements of self-denial (humility and temperance) are repugnant to modern man who has in recent years – on the widest scale imaginable since the collapse of the Roman Empire under the moral power of a virile Christian asceticism – developed startling new values catering to radical autonomy, sensual gratification, and a culture of death.¹⁰⁹

The problem therefore, with “new human values” in the present era arises *not* from an impossibility of the Church gaining insights into the depth of the Christian religion nor from the principle of genuine liturgical revision. Since the Church is a living organism obviously its tradition incarnates itself within the lives of successive generations and those conditions do not remain static.

For “new human values” to be inculturated into Christianity, however, they must first be sifted through the *whole* of the received tradition. Such a process is both *ascetic* and *time-intensive*.¹¹⁰ The problem today is that the changes in the life and practice of the Church in recent years have arisen within a climate of a changed perspective regarding the essential relationship of

time brings up for discussion the very foundations of the *depositum fidei* which for many are no longer clear.”

¹⁰⁸ Cf. *Mediator Dei*, 61.

¹⁰⁹ Abortion, for example, is no more than an eleventh hour form of contrived birth control by which the unjust killing of an innocent human becomes the remedy for the irresponsible sexual gratification of one or both of its parents.

¹¹⁰ Ratzinger, *Ratzinger Report*, 36. “There are in fact values, which, even though they originated outside the Church, can find their place – provided they are clarified and corrected – in her perspective. ...But whoever thinks that these two realities can meet each other without conflict or even be identical would betray that he understands neither the Church nor the world. ...After the phase of indiscriminate ‘openness’ it is time that the Christian reacquire the consciousness of belonging to a minority and of often being in opposition to what is obvious, plausible, and natural for that mentality which the New Testament calls – and certainly not in a positive sense – the ‘spirit of the world’. It is time to find again the courage of nonconformism, the capacity to oppose many of the trends of the surrounding culture, renouncing a certain euphoric post-conciliar solidarity.”

tradition to the whole of the Catholic fabric¹¹¹ and an intemperate haste in insisting that the new ideas be inculcated into Church life at once.

An example of the decomposition of the role of tradition as the root and reference in modern Catholic practice is the nearly complete disappearance of the ascetic tradition of fasting as *an ecclesial act* in the lives and language of the faithful. This change reflects “new ideas” about penance. The discipline of ecclesial fasting is quite consciously remembered by every Roman Catholic over the age of sixty. The need for fasting has its roots in man’s fallen nature, Biblical injunction, Christ’s words and example, the Church’s historical liturgy and the requirements of ecclesial positive law. In “modernity”, however, there is a decided distaste for self-denial. This distaste finds its source in anti-Christian concepts of freedom and self-fulfillment, both derivative of a selfish egocentricity which stands in opposition to Christian humility and salutary distrust of self.

This distaste for self-denial is embedded in what Msgr. Gamber refers to as “the new theology” and has been reflected in changes in the Church’s liturgy and law. As a natural consequence, such changes have been taken up by the clergy and spread to the faithful. Romano Amerio comments on an example of this in *Iota Unum*:

The important fact about the present state of the Church is, however, that [a] superficial spirit that undervalues and ridicules mortification of the sense, has spread to the clergy, who have thus lost any understanding of, or attachment to, the traditional discipline [of bodily mortification]. ...The Church has no reason to be ashamed of its [former] legislation [concerning fasting and penance] or to think its doctrine ridiculous; it was, in fact, perfectly reasonable, commanded by Christ and sanctioned by the obedience of generations that were not rougher or less fragile than the present, merely more thoughtful and less sensual.¹¹²

What is significant to this analysis is that liturgical references to ascetic self-control, the miraculous, grace, even the human soul, (among other things), have been reduced in the reformed texts of the Roman Rite. The reason given for altering the ancient, *received* texts is, in the words of Fr. Braga, the need for them to be “updated” so that they will reflect “new human values.” However, appreciation for some of the “updated” “new human values” reflected in the post-Conciliar euphoria has itself changed – *reversed*, in point of fact, as realism has overtaken euphoria in more recent years. All the same, the altered texts and liturgical transformations effected at the

¹¹¹ Cf. Cardinal Ratzinger’s analysis of this relationship in footnote ¹¹⁸.

zenith of that euphoria have *not* been fundamentally revised since their last “updating” to the insights gained in the mid to late 1960s. While the liturgical reform *has* continued to evolve since then, most of the textual revisions in the eucharistic liturgy itself have remained quite constant. The question here is not so much the addition of restored, ancient matter, or the insertion of the absolutely new (although that *is* problematic in certain places), but the *excisions* from what history had delivered in the received forms.

No matter what the motivation or the value of positive new insights that may have been thought at the time to need reflecting in the liturgy, the *process* itself is not normal to liturgical development. It renders it, in fact, no longer *theologia prima* or the font *ex quo* Christian faith and practice is experienced and drawn, but a receptacle *ad quem* “new human values” are imposed. This process bypasses the effect of *passing time’s wise judgment in true liturgical development*. It opens it instead to becoming a relic of a single, short, time-bound experience now frozen and passing out of its temporal context into a different one altogether by means of a fixed liturgical form. In the case of the new Roman rite, the frozen time-frame is 1964-1970, now thirty years out of date.¹¹³ But is this not the *very* thing decried by those anxious to rid the liturgy of its “time-bound” and “cultural” limitations? It is impossible that liturgy *remain* absolutely *à la mode*, short of being completely reinvented on a weekly basis. Here one unavoidably arrives at an irresolvable dilemma in the anti-historical liturgical theories behind no small part of what is now in place.

The deficiencies of artificially creating another liturgical ensemble, perceptible to some in the root of the thing early on, becomes increasingly evident to others as time allows its internal principles to unfold. This is part of the actual state of affairs with the liturgy at the present time. The whole of this problem was recently addressed by Pope John Paul II when speaking to the Bishops of the United States during their *ad limina* visit to Rome in October 1998.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Amerio, 239,240.

¹¹³ An example of this may be seen in the continued celebration of “Folk Masses,” complete with guitars and bongo drums, *long* after the popular American folk-music movement of the early 1960’s has faded from view. That this movement is enshrined, of all places, in the Roman Catholic liturgy is meat for a sociological study concerning the relationship of ritual and social memory.

¹¹⁴ John Paul II, “Il Discorso a Vescovi degli Stati Uniti Ricevuti in Visita *ad limina Apostolorum*”, 6. “...there has been misunderstanding of the very nature of liturgy, leading to abuses, polarization, and sometimes even grave scandal. After the experience of more than thirty years of liturgical renewal, we are well placed to assess both the strengths and weaknesses of what has been done, in order to more confidently plot our course into the future...The challenge now is to move beyond whatever misunderstandings there have been and to reach *the proper point of balance*

With every nuance taken into account and the most generous interpretation attributed to the redactors, it bears repeating that this *process* is a departure from the norms of liturgical development. It is one that can easily bypass the fundamental *submissive* relationship of *theology* to *tradition*. This is what underlies Cardinal Ratzinger's public statements when he says that much of the reform has been hasty and artificial. It also why he states in *La Mia Vita* (1997), "I am convinced that the ecclesial crisis in which we find ourselves today depends in great part on the collapse of the liturgy."¹¹⁵

This very public statement by the present Prefect of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith is either worthy of belief or it is irresponsible polemic. Since the Cardinal remains the Prefect of the Congregation and is in communication with Pope John Paul II, it must be assumed that the two have discussed what he is referring to. In light of this, *it would serve the good of the Church to understand what the Cardinal means*.

That will *certainly* require a genuine "asceticism of truth" for some since the remark runs counter to the prevailing enthusiasm of many concerning the liturgical reforms in the Church at large. A genuine intellectual submission to the *sources* – in this case empirical facts – will lead to grasping what the Cardinal is saying. This would also entail a humbling *adaequatio ad rem*, at least for some, among those who have not yet grasped the liturgical problem in its root causes and remote effects. The connection between the present ecclesial crisis and the liturgical reform is *real*, and as such, this reality was deeply embedded in the underlying provocations of the 1988 schism.

It is incontestable that there are serious problems in the Church that concern doctrines of faith and it is also incontestable that there have been serious changes in the forms of the liturgy (particularly alterations in the received texts) that touch on elements of doctrine.¹¹⁶ Part of the

especially by entering more deeply into *the contemplative dimension of worship...*" [emphasis in original]

¹¹⁵ Ratzinger, *La Mia Vita*, 113.

¹¹⁶ It is not the purpose of this paper to analyze in depth the textual changes in the Roman Liturgy but rather to outline factors operative in the 1988 schism. To verify what is being said about liturgical revisions having dogmatic impact, it is sufficient to cite Alfredo Cardinal Ottaviani, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, at the time the new missal was promulgated. In a letter and critical study regarding the reformed missal addressed to Pope Paul VI on September 25, 1969, Cardinal Ottaviani said, "The accompanying *Critical Study* is the work of a select group of bishops, 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. The pastoral reasons put forth

problem in the life of the Church today derives from an erosion of doctrinal belief aggravated by a startling lack of humility. There are many who claim dissenting from the dogmatic confession of Catholicism is some kind of “right.” This latter is in keeping with secular paradigms of human freedom and liberties of self-expression that can not be accepted by followers of Jesus Christ.¹¹⁷ Furthermore this syndrome is typical of the first principle of Protestantism – private judgment – refusal to submit to the Church, vehicle of tradition and mediator of Christian faith.

The whole of this complex problem of liturgy, doctrine, tradition and dissent was strongly operative in the 1988 schism. The lack of effective executive action in curbing public dissent coupled with a shocking array of changes in Catholic worship that certainly appeared to some *prima facie* to “Protestantize” the Catholic liturgy were volatile elements in the circumstances aggravating the crisis. Since that time, however, there have been no significant changes in the

to justify such a grave break, even if such reasons could still hold good in the face of doctrinal considerations, do not seem sufficient. The innovations in the *Novus Ordo* and the fact that all that is of perennial value only finds 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 the 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.” (quoted from *The Ottaviani Intervention: A Short Critical Study of the New Order of Mass*, trans. Anthony Cekada (Rockford: TAN Books, 1992), 27,28.)

It is also not the purpose of this paper to analyze Cardinal Ottaviani’s statement beyond citing it as an expert opinion by a Prefect of the CDF that: 1.) significant changes in the received forms of the Roman liturgy have taken place, 2.) there exists a connection between liturgical upheaval, lessening of doctrinal faith and the fomenting of unrest among subjects of the rite whose liturgy has been changed. The *Petition of the People of the Church* is one striking example of restiveness in the Church today. One of the demands in the *Petition* states, “We aim at granting communities the right to celebrate the Eucharist and to live their own faith in a plurality free from historically-conditioning rules.”

¹¹⁷ For a discussion on the question of dissent see “The Canon of Criticism” in Cardinal Ratzinger’s *Salt of the Earth* (pp. 181-213), in which a whole series of topics is discussed over which there is public criticism and dissent in the Church today. In the opening remarks he says, “I would stress again that all of these are certainly general issues, but I also believe that we go astray when we raise them to *the* standard questions and make them the only concerns of Christianity. There is a very simple reflection that argues against this (which by the way, Johann Baptist Metz has mentioned in an article on the “Petition of the People of the Church”). These issues are resolved in Lutheran Christianity. On these points it has taken the other path, and it is quite plain that it hasn’t thereby solved the problem of being a Christian in today’s world and that the problem of Christianity, the effort of being a Christian, remains as dramatic as before. Metz, if I recall correctly, asks why we [Catholics and the Catholic Church] ought to make ourselves a clone of Protestant Christianity...”

Converging points of view repeatedly indicate that changes in the Church are perceived as an accommodation to Protestantism. Public perceptions, right or wrong, are part of the life of the Church and certainly contribute to its problems in the exercise of its pastoral mission. The 1988 schism is strongly indicative of problems deriving from perception of change in the liturgy and its implication on faith and order for many of the faithful. According to Cardinal Ratzinger’s various observations this issue has not been resolved.

revised texts so disturbing to many. Textual revisions in the missal are an aspect of what Cardinal Ratzinger refers to when speaking of “reforming the reform.”

One of the principal effects of the law of worship is its influence over the law of belief. That there have been textual omissions (Fr. Braga called them “retouchings”) that have considerably reduced mention of ascetic self-denial, despising the world, sin, the existence of hell, judgment, fear of God, intercession of the saints, the miraculous, and the human soul can not help but effect some sort of change in the faith which the Catholic people have in these aspects of revelation. After all *legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi*, and Fr. Gelineau insists that changing the form changes the thing signified by the form. Be all this as it may, and more fundamentally, the *whole phenomenon* reflects an even more radical problem: perception of the *nature of tradition* and *its essential relationship to Catholicism* in the first place.¹¹⁸

By way of contrast, the stated purpose of Pope John XXIII in calling the Second Vatican Council needs to be born in mind. The following is taken from his speech at the opening session of the Council, October 11, 1962:

¹¹⁸ The following trenchant analysis of soul, liturgy, and tradition is taken from Cardinal Ratzinger’s book, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life*, trans. Michael Waldstein, (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1988), 248, 249. “The crisis became manifest after the Second Vatican Council: under the impact of the claims of the wholly new, the earlier continuum of tradition was relegated to the abandoned space of the “pre-conciliar”. The impression arose that Christianity in all its aspects was to be sketched out anew. The long prepared questions, in the realm of eschatology as elsewhere, took on the force of elementary powers that would toss the fabric of tradition almost carelessly to one side. It speaks volumes for the speed with which all this happened that within a year of the Council the Dutch Catechism had already put the doctrine of the immortality of the soul behind it, substituting in its place a remarkably obscure anthropology of resurrection-by-stages. Indeed, the Missal of Paul VI dared to speak of the soul only here and there, and that in timorous fashion, otherwise avoiding all mention of it where possible. As for the German rite of burial, it has, so far as I can see, obliterated it altogether. That such a deeply rooted and central feature of Christian faith and prayer could disappear so quickly must surely arouse astonishment. This process is not to be ascribed primarily to changed insights about man. Rather is it, as with Luther, first and foremost the expression of a basic change in relationship to tradition. To this degree it is symptomatic of a quite general crisis of Catholicism itself, for the latter is essentially characterized by a definite relation to tradition. Precisely this relation to tradition, proper to Catholicism, has now become unintelligible. One must say more: it has become unintelligible because it stands in opposition to the understanding of history found in a technological world with its counter-historical rationality. Looking from this angle, we can see that the power of the new vision of things to carry all before it, and the remarkable lostness of what is Catholic in the modern world, is itself correspondingly intelligible.”

Many Catholics are keenly aware of the right relationship of worship to tradition and the doctrinal integrity of the traditional Roman liturgy. Such Catholics are not swept before the “counter-historical rationality” of the modern world nor the root problems operative in the actual liturgical reform. By way of an example they find the absence of any mention of the *soul* on the liturgical commemoration of the dead (November 2, All Souls Day) in the new liturgy absurd, if not undermining to Catholic faith. This issue, it must be insisted, is not merely an academic *discussion*. It concerns the right grasp of the relationship of tradition to public worship and the doctrinal faith that the *traditio* of worship causes to happen in the Church and her members. This issue permeates the whole of the liturgical crisis of the Church today and is

The Twenty-first Ecumenical Council, which will draw upon the effective and important wealth of juridical, liturgical, apostolic, and administrative experiences, wishes to transmit the doctrine, pure and integral, without any attenuation or distortion, which throughout twenty centuries...has become the common patrimony of men. ...from the renewed, serene, and tranquil adherence to all the teaching of the Church in its entirety and preciseness as it still shines forth in the Acts of the Council of Trent and First Vatican Council, the Christian, Catholic, and apostolic spirit of the whole world expects a step forward toward a doctrinal penetration and formation of consciousness in faithful and perfect conformity to the authentic doctrine...¹¹⁹

If, according to the words of Pope John XXIII, the received patrimony of faith and practice of twenty centuries and the acts of Trent and Vatican I are to “shine forth” with even greater clarity and without “attenuation or distortion”, it is most difficult to square the *reason given by Fr. Braga* and some of the many “retouchings” (especially the omissions) made in overhauling the received liturgical texts with *the Council’s entire set purpose*.

If the dogmatic canons of the Council of Trent are to remain intact, then there certainly can *not* be an “entirely new foundation of eucharistic theology” in the Church’s authentic teaching that supersedes what went before the 1960’s. In any event, the old liturgy reflects the apostolic tradition of eucharistic belief with absolute clarity. If in this case alone, *insights* into the eucharistic mystery have been gained since the Council, it is precisely because they are *not* “entirely new foundations” but essentially linked to *old* truths and discernible within the historical – traditional – contents of a faith that can not change, itself being the unified foundation for understanding the eucharistic Mystery and embedded in every traditional Catholic liturgical usage. Authentic new insights would, therefore, easily blend with the received liturgical texts because they would flow from the amazing Scriptural, Patristic, doctrinal richness they contain and same divine origin from which they all have sprung. The relationship, therefore, of certain of the “new insights” and tradition (as it has been historically understood in Catholicism) is enmeshed in the liturgical problem.

The deliberate effort to change the law of praying in order to introduce different understandings of the faith is found no where in Christian history except among heresiarchs seeking

deeply operative in the 1988 schism.

¹¹⁹ Pope John XXIII, “Opening Speech to the Council”, 11 October 1962, in Walter M. Abbott, ed. *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Guild Press, 1966), 715. The contents of this speech should be compared to the demands of the *Petition of the People of the Church* for an excellent juxtaposition between the Council and its anti-spirit.

to change the Catholic faith that public prayer induces. This effect was why Protestant reformers changed the Catholic liturgy, and conversely, why many Catholics have been deeply disturbed at some of the effects of the post-Conciliar liturgical changes.

The need to significantly change an entire received liturgical culture arises either from an unconscious misunderstanding of what the whole fabric entails or a conscious ill will in its regard. In either case the end result would be the same: confusion, the probability of an erosion of faith and practice, and in their wake, error.¹²⁰ If such changes were to derive from ill will, the results would be intentional as was the case of heretical reformers in the 16th century. If such changes were to derive from a mistaken good will, then their *negative* effects would have been unforeseen. (Voices in the Church today, among them Cardinal Ratzinger, have said this about the modern reform.) In either case, the process itself is not an historical development, it is not traditional in its nature. Liturgy is simply not manufactured following upon a pattern of *a priori* theological decisions.¹²¹ If *any* degree of Protestant ideology were somehow implicated in the process, it would only aggravate the whole.

Herein arises the conundrum in the new rule of Catholic worship. Since liturgy is *theologia prima*, it is *the* source of faith and practice. It is a thing *given* by God through the patrimony of the Church as a *continuous, living whole*. It is *received* by man – including the guardians of the Church’s Mysteries – and must be approached with humility, reverence, a keen awareness of fallen nature’s frailties, seeking in it what it says to us and *not* what we would rather impose on it. The Eucharistic liturgy in particular is the summit to which and from which all else in the life of the Church and the faithful flows. Above all else it should be safeguarded from unwarranted

¹²⁰ It was to the urgency of this phenomenon that Cardinal Ottaviani averted Pope Paul VI in his letter and *Critical Study* referenced in footnote ¹¹⁶. The Cardinal made no inference to ill will in whatever the motives lying behind the changes; rather he dispassionately drew attention to the effects he felt the liturgical changes were responsible for.

¹²¹ An illustration of this reversed pattern of procedure towards the liturgy is evident in Archbishop Weakland’s article “Liturgical Renewal: Two Latin Rites?”, *America*, Vol. 176, No. 20, 7 June 1997, 12, 13. “Many say that the bishops assembled at the Second Vatican Council would have been wiser had they first articulated the ecclesial vision of that council and then proceeded to discuss and outline the liturgical renewal. The liturgical discussion, they rightly say, would have followed logically after “The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church” (*Lumen Gentium*) and “The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World” (*Gaudium et Spes*). This may well be true, but we all know that hindsight is easy...” The Council preceded as it did and *not* as the Archbishop says it should have because the pattern followed accords with tradition, as a *clearer* hindsight indicates. Ecclesiology flows from the tradition of worship and so the Archbishop’s “they rightly say” position is quite wrongly put. The liturgical upheaval that followed the Council was contrary to its directive wisdom. The Archbishop’s analysis that an *a priori* theology should determine liturgical alteration is at the root of the liturgical problems.

alterations precisely because it is so intimately united to the life of faith. It is for this reason that a systematic revision of the entire eucharistic liturgy is without foundation in Catholic history or practice, and renders the present crisis unique in Church history. The 1988 schism is an outgrowth of this historical conundrum.

That the “thin end” of liturgy (outward forms, words, gestures, texts, etc.) is subject to responsible modification is not in question.¹²² What is being addressed here is the practical results of what has come to pass, now an empirical *given* in the daily fabric of the Church’s life: the people see and participate in these conditions and their problems. What is perceived by some as a “Protestantization” of worship is not entirely unfounded, at least in some of the effects they have lived through. The determined retention of the historical form of worship has been greatly fomented by the effects of the actual reform. This latter phenomenon is a pastoral reality that can not be ignored, particularly as it bears directly upon the problems inherent in the reform itself.¹²³

It is in this regard that the real dilemma of the liturgical climate since the Council’s end emerges. Many Catholics have been traumatized by this *given*. In the present state of affairs, abstracting from any and every motive behind the process by which it happened, the reform remains effectively an artificial, academic product in a subject that required a great deal more caution than what was exhibited. The resolution will have to be more nuanced than merely “stopping the clock” on the liturgy or “jumping into the future.” A general solution must arise from right principles put into operation, with the past thirty years ideology and polemic put entirely to the side.

In the meanwhile, one thing has certainly been grasped by many shocked by the reform: “separated brethren” do not in any way subsist in the *Roman Rite*, perfectly or imperfectly. Therefore they possess no direct spiritual interest in its immense and ancient patrimony. Equally, they have no personal interest in the religious formation of children who, along with their parents, *are* members of that Rite and who take its religion quite seriously. The sacrifice of the oldest

¹²² Gamber, *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy*, 6. “No one objects to the Church leadership adapting liturgical forms to the realities of our time, if this is really necessary. But it has to be done with discretion and great care; and in any case without a break with Tradition. Even the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* cautions us on this point in Article 23...”

¹²³ Ratzinger, “Speech to the Bishops of Chile”, 5, 6. “...one could not imagine a phenomenon of this size which did not draw upon positive elements which generally do not find an adequate field of expression in today’s Church. This is why we should consider this situation [the schism and its causes] above all as an opportunity for an examination of conscience. We should seriously question ourselves about the deficiencies of our pastoral work which

historical liturgy of Christianity that had been the means of spiritual sustenance for millions, for centuries, for the sake of “not offending” the descendants of those who rejected its *revealed religion* was, and continues to be for many, incredible. That this was a purpose explicitly stated by the architects of the actual changes has done nothing to encourage enthusiasm for their work among those who have found it upsetting.

The radical statements cited above giving reasons for what actually happened in the reform have been quite clearly and publicly stated by the men who played pivotal roles in bringing it to pass. No opposition to change was permitted as it came to be in successive waves. The process continues although more recent Vatican policy has clearly been putting things into much deeper perspective. The readmission of the older liturgy, once thought to have been an absolute impossibility, is one example of this development.

Be all this as it may, according to Cardinal Ratzinger, the net result of the post-conciliar process is that,

...in the place of liturgy as the fruit of development came fabricated liturgy. We abandoned the organic, living process of growth and development over centuries, and replaced it – as in a manufacturing process – with a fabrication, a banal on-the-spot product.¹²⁴

Whether or not the reformed liturgy can attract Protestants is a moot point.¹²⁵ The serious issue is that the present crisis in the Latin Church and those dependent on it – dissension, loss of faith, abandonment of vocations, schism – is all *intrinsically bound up with a rupture of continuity in the historical worship of the Roman Rite*. Cardinal Ratzinger observes, therefore, quite rightly

these events call into question.”

¹²⁴ Ratzinger, *Preface* in Gamber, *La Reforme Liturgique en Question*, 8.

¹²⁵ That it does not attract some is a certainty. Due to the liberal dissolution of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States over the past four decades that body underwent a convulsive self-destruction following its September 1976 decision to alter canon law and permit the ordination of women. One of many results was that over a dozen Episcopalian parishes and their clergy were received into the Antiochian Orthodox Church. This group is representative of the ideals of the Oxford Movement and possesses a strongly developed sense of the Catholic liturgical tradition. It is significant that they chose not to become Roman Catholics but Orthodox in a newly created “Western Rite Vicariate”, the equivalent of Western “Uniates” with Orthodoxy. These ex-Protestants retained neither their Protestant liturgy nor the vernacular *Novus Ordo Missae* (which some had used as Episcopalians) at their corporate reception. Instead, in as much as they are culturally Western Christians, when admitted into the Orthodox Church they were permitted use of the *historical Western liturgy* of the unbroken (pre 1054 schism) Church, but with that liturgy’s post-schism developments. Accordingly, the sacramentary they employ contains the traditional calendar and liturgy of Saint Gregory the Great in an Elizabethan English translation. This is a remarkable testimony to the ecumenical and historical value of the traditional Roman Rite of Mass in reference both to Protestants and the Orthodox. (cf. *Orthodox Missal According to the Use of the Western Vicariate of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America* (Stanton: Saint Luke’s Priory

that,

Dramatically urgent for the life of the Church is a renewal of the liturgical conscience, a liturgical reconciliation, that turns to knowing again the unity of the history of the liturgy, and understands Vatican II not as a rupture but as a moment in its development. I am convinced that the ecclesial crisis in which we find ourselves today depends in great part on the collapse of the liturgy¹²⁶

The relationship between the ecclesial crisis and the liturgical upheaval is more sociological fact than theological conjecture. In a series of lectures sponsored by the John Courtney Murray Forum at the Harvard Club in New York City in 1978, a paper was presented by Peter L. Berger, a Lutheran professor of sociology from Rutgers University, in which he made the following remarks concerning the changes in the Catholic Church:

I'm sorry if I must be offensive...but if sociology was a motive here, it was extremely bad sociology. If a thoroughly malicious sociologist, bent on injuring the Catholic community as much as possible, had been an adviser to the Church, he could hardly have done a better job. ...there were extraordinary changes imposed on the Catholic community in areas where the authorities could have moved much more circumspectly. The liturgical revolution – no other term will do – is the most important case in point, touching millions of Catholics at the very core of their religious life. Let me mention only the sudden abolition and indeed prohibition of the Latin Mass, the transportation of the officiating priest from the front to the back of the altar (the first change symbolically diminished the universality of the Mass, the second its transcendent reference) and the massive assault on a wide variety of popular piety. ...Please don't say that the tumultuous consequences of these actions could not have been foreseen. ...I, for one, foresaw at least some of them. I vividly recall a conversation with an American *peritus* at the time of the Council, in which I opined that the abolition of the Latin liturgy would be a terrible sociological mistake...¹²⁷

It is interesting to note how a Protestant sociologist grasped the fundamental value and impact of both Latin and the traditional position of priest and altar in a single stroke. From a Catholic perspective, Dr. Dietrich von Hildebrand added the following trenchant remark in *The Devastated Vineyard*:

Truly, if one of the devils in C. S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters* had been entrusted with the ruin of the liturgy he could not have done it better.¹²⁸

Press, 1995).)

¹²⁶ Ratzinger, *La Mia Vita*, 112, 113.

¹²⁷ Peter Berger, "Revolutionary Enthusiasm or Reactionary Nostalgia? Some Impertinent Suggestions for Catholics," *Catholic Mind*, Vol. XXVI, No. 1326, October 1978, 17.

¹²⁸ von Hildebrand, 71.

A clear indication of problems with the actual reform is found in Pope John Paul's *Dominicae Cenaе*, addressed to the bishops and priests of the Church in 1980. While maintaining a positive hold on the principle of an authentic reform and development, it is clear that by then he understood the actual state of affairs was fomenting a genuine crisis. At fault were several converging elements and abuses. Towards the end of the letter, in a truly astonishing statement coming from a Pope, His Holiness said,

As I bring these considerations to an end, I would like to ask forgiveness – in my own name and in the name of all of you, venerable and dear brothers in the episcopate – for everything which, for whatever reason, through whatever human weakness, impatience or neglect, and also through the at times partial, one-sided and erroneous application of the directives of the Second Vatican Council, may have caused scandal and disturbance concerning the interpretation of the doctrine and the veneration due to this great sacrament. And I pray the Lord Jesus that in the future we may avoid in our manner of dealing with this sacred mystery anything which could weaken or disorient in any way the sense of reverence and love that exists in our faithful people.¹²⁹

Unfortunately, despite the Pope's heartfelt plea and sincere apology to the faithful deeply offended by the liturgical problems, most of them continued unabated.

In closing this section of this study, I believe it fair to say that the actual changes in the liturgy following the Council did not represent its authentic will. As Monsignor Gamber's observes:

The revision [of the Missal] made in 1965 did not touch the traditional liturgical rite. In accordance with the mandate of Article 50 of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, it had been primarily concerned with removing some of the later additions to the Order of the Mass. The publication of the *Ordo Missae* of 1969, however, created a new liturgical rite. In other words, the traditional liturgical rite had not simply been revised as the Council had intended. Rather, it had been completely abolished, and a couple years later, the traditional liturgy was, in fact, forbidden. All this leads to the question: Does such a radical reform

¹²⁹ John Paul II, *Dominicae Cenaе*, 12, 24 February 1980, Vatican trans. (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, no date given). One abuse the Pope mentions explicitly is the denial of communion being distributed directly into the mouth of communicants who so present themselves during Mass. This exceptionally ancient method of communicating the Blessed Sacrament used to be the exclusive practice of every rite in Catholic Christianity. The law protecting the practice was changed in order to relieve an abuse limited to specific countries in the Latin West. Having then become legal everywhere, in *Dominicae Cenaе* the Pope decries that the indult (communion in the hand) against the norm (communion on the tongue) is being forced onto people even when they freely choose to employ the traditional and *normative* practice. An argument can be made from the point of human psychology that the novel practice contributes to what the Pope calls a "weakening of the reverence and love" and "veneration" "due this great sacrament," and most likely the reason why he continued to forbid the practice in Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome long after it had been adopted everywhere else.

follow the tradition of the Church? Given the evidence we have presented, one can not invoke the Council's decisions to support such an argument. As we have already shown, the assertion which continues to be made, that the inclusion of some parts of the traditional Missal into the new one means a continuation of the Roman rite, is insupportable.¹³⁰

Unfortunately, and in summary, the Council's urging in Article 23 [SC] that "there must be no innovations unless the good of the Church genuinely and certainly requires them" has been widely ignored, and the reforms that have been implemented were not confined to what is sensible and necessary. More and more change was demanded; people in the Church wanted to be more and more open to some very controversial ideas of the New Theology; and finally, the Church was to show itself opening up to the modern world. Although the argument is used over and over again by the people responsible for creating the new Mass, they can not claim that what they have done is what the Council actually wanted. The instructions given by the Liturgy Commission were general in nature, and they opened up many possible ways for implementing what the Commission had stipulated, but one statement we can make with certainty is that the new *Ordo* of the Mass that has now emerged would not have been endorsed by the majority of the Council Fathers.¹³¹

What occurred in place of the Council's directives contributed to a general unrest in the Church and not the invigoration of Christian life as the Fathers had intended. Twenty years after the Council ended Cardinal Ratzinger observed in this regard:

What is certain is that the Council did not take the turn that John XXIII had expected (let us recall that countries like Holland, Switzerland and the United States were strongholds of traditionalism and loyalty to Rome!). It must also be admitted that, in respect to the whole Church, the prayer of Pope John that the Council signify a new leap forward for the Church, to renewed life and unity, has not – at least yet – been granted.¹³² ...the situation has changed, the climate has changed for the worse with respect to that which sustained a euphoria whose fruits now lie before us as a warning...¹³³ If one looks directly at the 'general meteorological situation' of the Spirit, we must speak, as we did earlier, of a crisis of faith and of the Church. We can overcome it only if we face up to it forthrightly.¹³⁴

In the face of these operative circumstances the situation became radically disruptive to many who were defenseless against them. Some leaned in the direction of schism in the absence of what they considered an adequate redress or effective alternatives to conditions they were powerless to change.¹³⁵

¹³⁰ Gamber, *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy*, 33, 34.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹³² Ratzinger, *Ratzinger Report*, 41.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 32. In this 1985 book, Cardinal Ratzinger said concerning the resistance movement under the

influence of Archbishop Lefebvre, “Clearly everything must be done to prevent this movement from giving rise to a schism...We must commit ourselves to reconciliation, so long and so far as it is possible, and we must utilize all the opportunities granted to us for this purpose.”

III. The Motu Proprio *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta*

A. The 1988 Schism of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre

In view of the foregoing analysis it not surprising that there were some Catholics in the Roman Rite who came to feel, in one way or another, the transformation of their religious world had been so vast as to have become unrecognizable as a “return to their ancestral traditions”¹³⁶ and alien to the piety inherent in their religious formation. It had nothing to do with concepts concerning the structure or government of the Church, nor was it an alienation from the Papacy as central in their faith. Among such people were (and still are) those who recall the universality of the classic Latin liturgy, the stability and certainty of Catholic faith and teaching, the reassurance of religious and priests immediately recognizable as such by their outward appearance, piety, and attitude. There were (are) some who possess living and sympathetic memories of the splendor of a Solemn High Mass sung in Latin and Gregorian chant (to quote Fr. Gelineau¹³⁷), and who feel its loss more important to the Church than simply a misguided nostalgia. These Catholics did not (do not) consciously harbor a doctrine of separation from the Church in their minds or practices.

These sorts of Catholics were among those who resisted the dismantling of the old order in the turbulent years following the Council. Resistance to that process was at first disconnected, sporadic and without any central voice. Indeed, no one had anticipated what began to take place. By the early 1970’s, one kind of resistance movement had taken on a specific juridical shape under the leadership of the well-known retired French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre.¹³⁸

An eminent prelate of the Roman Church, Marcel Lefebvre had been Superior General of the Missionary Holy Ghost Fathers and Metropolitan Archbishop of Dakar, Africa, with many dioceses under his authority. He had been named by Pius XII as Vatican representative to all of

¹³⁶ *OE*, 6.

¹³⁷ Gelineau, *Demain La Liturgie*, 10. “Que ceux qui ont encore connu et célébré comme moi la grande-messe chantée en Latin et en grégorien se souviennent, s’ils le peuvent.” Many still can and do, and are motivated by a theologically informed longing. Pope John Paul II, in his Motu Proprio *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta*, has identified this longing as “rightful”. (cf. *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta*, 5c.)

¹³⁸ Ratzinger, *Ratzinger Report*, 32. “Archbishop Lefebvre’s movement is probably much less broad numerically [than the progressive “left” the Cardinal is discussing], but it has a well-defined juridical organization, seminaries, religious houses, etc.”

French-speaking Africa. In 1959, Pope John XXIII named him to the *Coetus Internationalis Patrum*, the central preparatory committee charged with drawing up the schema for the Second Vatican Council. The Archbishop took an active role in the Council, and was identified by the members of the media and others as belonging to the “ultra-conservative camp”, a label he never escaped.¹³⁹ This was due to the fact that he, and the many hundreds of other Council Fathers similarly cast, pursued what well-organized liberal voices considered a “reactionary” and “curial” policy in the Council debates. In the long run what that amounted to was a palpably conservative, traditional continuity with the Church’s past wisdom and praxis. This position was not appreciated by the antithetical forces within the Council ranged against such conservatism.¹⁴⁰

During all the years of heated conflict the Archbishop had with Rome in the upheavals after the Council had ended, his followers claimed he had refused to sign two of the conciliar documents. That neither of these were *Sacrosanctum Concilium* demonstrates that even this bishop did not think the Council intended to dismantle the liturgy of the Roman Rite.

In 1970, Archbishop Lefebvre received permission to undertake a religious foundation for men in Fribourg, Switzerland. He did this at the instigation of a number of young seminarians who had sought him out for an authentic priestly formation during that time of confusion in the Church. For several years his organization stabilized and grew, having received its canonical approbation from the proper diocesan authorities. A second foundation took place in Albano, Italy, when the Archbishop purchased the former diocesan seminary, closed soon after the Council ended.

Archbishop Lefebvre often expressed a strong desire that his seminarians should know and love Rome, and that they develop a sense of *Romanitá*. The Albano foundation made that desire possible almost from the outset of the prelate’s undertakings. Down through the years, therefore, most of his seminarians have spent time there in prayer and study at some point during their priestly formation. That they were never instructed to despise Rome or the Pope was certainly a known factor during all the later years of the standoff.

¹³⁹ “On File”, *Origins*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 3 June 1976, 18. “He [Pope Paul VI] criticized both ultra-conservatives and ultra-progressives. The Pope singled out for rebuke Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre who has founded a popular international traditionalist movement, a seminary, and several religious houses...”

¹⁴⁰ Cf. footnote ² for Cardinal Ratzinger’s remarks on some dynamics at work in the council itself. These were the strongest elements in opposition to the “conservative” views expressed by Lefebvre and hundreds like him in the Council.

By 1976, his society had come under open attack, particularly by certain members of the French episcopacy. Central to the complaint was the continued use of the old Roman liturgy in his canonically approved seminary now located at Ecône, Switzerland. That this same seminary was bulging at the seams with clean-cut young Frenchmen wearing cassocks when the seminaries in France were depleted of all but a few seminarians now sporting blue-jeans and long hair in the anti-clerical mode of the day, did not help the widening gulf between the two sides. Lefebvre consciously promoted a “traditional” Catholic priestly training: discipline and clerical dress were combined with a classic program of philosophy and theology, spirituality and asceticism. Many of the Council reforms on seminary life were put into practice in his seminaries when absent from so many others from which many of his students had come. His formation program was why he drew so many vocations, and why many stayed even when the men did not like the tensions with Rome.¹⁴¹

On June 29, 1976, a genuine breach occurred between the Archbishop and Pope Paul VI over Lefebvre’s priestly ordinations scheduled for the end of that academic year. The Archbishop refused to cancel the scheduled ordinations and was suspended *a divinis* by the Pope for disobedience. This occurred in a climate of widespread and acrimonious tension born of the whole dynamic operative in the Church in Europe at the time and Lefebvre’s outspoken resistance towards many of the trends.¹⁴² The 1976 ordinations were attended by a huge throng of the faithful, and continue to be so to this day.

A kind of cold war followed during the following eleven years. During that time the Archbishop ignored his suspension and continued ordaining priests and expanding his society, invariably at the demand of lay people the world over. The growth was very considerable, and included the development of five different seminaries. During this period, too, a nascent psychology of schism from Rome had also ingrained itself into the minds of a number of his priests

¹⁴¹ Cf. Ratzinger, *Ratzinger Report*, 33. The Cardinal discusses the internal dynamics of Lefebvre’s community and the forces responsible for leading many men into it, as well as the reasons – and anxieties – with which they remained.

¹⁴² On the liturgical question Pope Paul VI would not budge despite the appeals he received from bishops, priests, and laity the world over to allow the traditional missal to stand alongside the new. (Gamber discusses this in his book (p. 45) referring to Cardinals Ottaviani and Bacci’s *Study* (cited in footnote ¹¹⁸) and other highly qualified persons in the Church.) Tolerance of the older liturgy had to wait until Pope John Paul II granted it in 1984 and more widely in 1988.

and seminarians, the product of the conditions of their isolation. But desire for a genuine reconciliation was also present in both the Archbishop and Rome. This desire also existed strongly among many of the superiors, other priests and seminarians of the constantly expanding society. In light of this, an openness for dialog with Rome was maintained during the years following his suspension.

In 1987 an important development was reported in *L'Osservatore Romano*:

In regard to the dialog in progress a conversation took place [between Cardinal Ratzinger and Archbishop Lefebvre]...At the end of their conversation, held in a spirit of communion, Archbishop Lefebvre accepted the nomination of an Apostolic Visitor who would be given the task of gathering information aimed at defining the terms of a canonical regularization of the "Priestly Society of St. Pius X."¹⁴³

The Papally appointed visitor, Edouard Cardinal Gagnon, undertook an extensive visit to the Archbishop's society during November and December of 1987.¹⁴⁴ The many positive elements of Archbishop Lefebvre's work were recognized, particularly as the rancor over the "Latin Mass" issue had abated somewhat by that time, a decidedly greater tolerance in the matter having emerged among key figures in Rome.¹⁴⁵ Recommendations were made for a canonical reconciliation by which the congregation and its work would be integrated into the mainstream of the Catholic Church. This proposal included lifting the sanctions against the Archbishop and his priests, a sanation of the marriages they had witnessed, the concession to ordain a bishop from Lefebvre's own ranks (subject to normal procedures and the Pope's approval) to succeed him, as well as a series of other important matters. Principal among these was recognition on Archbishop Lefebvre's side of the binding quality of Vatican II and its documents according to the sense that they had been promulgated.¹⁴⁶ On May 5, 1988, a "Protocol" was signed by both the Archbishop and Cardinal Ratzinger that provided a concrete basis for proceeding towards regularization.

¹⁴³ "Communique", *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, No. 43, 26 October 1987, 19.

¹⁴⁴ John Paul II, "Papal Letter Regarding Archbishop Lefebvre" *Origins*, Vol. 17, No. 46, 28 April 1988, 804; "Informatory Note", *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, No. 26, 27 June 1988, 1.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship, *Quattuor Abhinc Annos, Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, Vol. LXXVI, 3 October 1984, 1088, 1089. [cf. Appendix] This letter granted a restricted access to public use of the 1962 *Missale*. With this measure in place, dialog with Lefebvre's organization could more effectively move forward since the liturgical issue had already been resolved separately. What remained were specific doctrinal differences between the Archbishop and the Church concerning certain Conciliar teachings. Though separate from the liturgical question, for Archbishop Lefebvre these Conciliar teachings were implicated with it.

¹⁴⁶ "Breakdown of Negotiations With Archbishop Lefebvre", *Origins*, Vol. 18, No. 7, 30 June 1988, 99.

During the night of May 5, however, over fundamental positions touching on certain Conciliar teachings themselves (separate from the liturgical question), the Archbishop lost confidence in the operative plausibility of the signed “Protocol” and decided to break with it. He let this be known, and followed that with a public announcement of his intention to consecrate four bishops on June 30, 1988, destined to succeed him in his work. This unexpected development came as a great shock to many of his priests and seminarians, and some left his society because of it.

On June 17, 1988, he received a formal *monition* against his proposed intention from Cardinal Gantin, Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops.¹⁴⁷ Ignoring it as well as a June 29 telegram from Cardinal Ratzinger asking him to come to Rome and urging him not to proceed with his episcopal consecrations¹⁴⁸, the Archbishop consummated the rupture by the illegal ordination of four bishops at Ecône on June 30, 1988, in the presence of an unusually immense throng of the faithful. He was assisted in the act by His Excellency, Antonio de Castro Mayer, retired Bishop of Campos, Brazil.¹⁴⁹

In a formal *Decree* from the Congregation of Bishops issued on July 1, 1988, Archbishop Lefebvre was informed that he had “performed a schismatical act by the episcopal consecration of four priests without pontifical mandate” for reason of which he was “*ipso facto* excommunicated *latae sententiae* reserved to the Apostolic See” along with the co-consecrator and the new bishops.¹⁵⁰ Priests and faithful were sternly warned against supporting the schism. A direct consequence of the decree is that those who formally adhere to the schism “shall incur *ipso facto* the very grave penalty of excommunication”.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷ “Canonical Warning”, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, No. 26, 27 June 1988, 2.

¹⁴⁸ “Telegram to Monsignor Lefebvre”, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, No. 27, 4 July 1988, 12.

¹⁴⁹ The four bishops later consecrated a fifth from among the majority of priests in the Diocese of Campos, Brazil, who were in dissidence from de Castro Mayer’s canonically appointed successor. Central to the crisis in Campos was liturgy and doctrine. Bishop de Castro Mayer had, like Archbishop Lefebvre, been on the Central Preparatory Commission for the Council and an active participant in all the Council’s deliberations.

¹⁵⁰ Congregation for Bishops, “Decree”, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, No. 28, 11 July 1988, 1.

¹⁵¹ Clerics who join this organization by a formal statement of association with its principles would thereby incur the censure. On May 24, 1998, His Excellency Salvador Lazo, retired Bishop of La Union, Philippines, made such a public statement and formally associated himself with Archbishop Lefebvre’s Society of Saint Pius X. He addressed a letter to this effect to the Pope, which shortly thereafter was published in the Society’s English language journal. (cf. “Profession of Faith of H.E. Bishop Salvador Lazo”, *The Angelus*, Vol. XXI, No. 7, 26-28). He would fall under the canonical censure.

Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre died on March 25, 1990, without being canonically reconciled to the Church. His worldwide organization has continued, united in purpose and zealous in their liturgical and doctrinal undertakings. They continue to pose thorny questions regarding post-Conciliar reforms, and remain a pastoral concern to the Church everywhere. They are a sign of contradiction indicative of a greater tragedy that should never have happened in the first place.

B. Pope John Paul II's Pastoral Measure

It is not the scope of this paper to chronicle more fully Archbishop Lefebvre's movement or analyze the intricacies of its relationship with Rome. What is germane is that it is indicative of a wider problem in the Church at large, and this was examined by Cardinal Ratzinger in an address he made to the bishops of Chile shortly after the 1988 event:

A fact which should make us think is that a good many people outside the small circle of the members of the Fraternity of Monsignor Lefebvre see in him a sort of guide or at least useful ally. It is not sufficient to invoke political causes, nostalgia, or other secondary cultural reasons: these are not enough to explain the popularity found even and especially with young people, in very diverse countries and places with completely different political and cultural conditions...without a doubt one could not imagine a phenomenon of this size which did not draw on positive elements which generally do not find an adequate field of expression in today's Church.¹⁵²

The positive element in the worldwide movement of which the Lefebvre schism is partly indicative is the value of the classical Roman liturgical ensemble and the doctrinal stability it represents. Once the living norm throughout the whole of the Roman Church and substantially unchanged for well over a thousand years, it needs neither defense nor justification. The Council Fathers declared that the rite was to be preserved and fostered in every way. The pervasive problems encountered everywhere bound up with revamping its entire fabric is focused in microcosm by the 1988 event. For that reason the tragedy gives the whole Church an occasion to stop and reconsider what Christianity is all about in the first place. Indeed Cardinal Ratzinger would later remark,

A community is calling its very being into question when it suddenly declares that what until now had been its holiest and highest possession is strictly forbidden and when it makes longing for it seem downright indecent. Can it be trusted any more about anything else? Won't it proscribe again tomorrow what it prescribes today?¹⁵³

Pope John Paul II moved to the heart of this matter when, in the Motu Proprio *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta*, he insisted on a real soul-searching on everyone's part in the light of the 1988 debacle. While Archbishop Lefebvre was at fault for breaking his unity with Rome, the Pope shows an

¹⁵² Ratzinger, "Speech to the Bishops of Chile", 5.

¹⁵³ Ratzinger, *Salt of the Earth*, 176.

underlying awareness of the aggravating causes involved in the rupture. In *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta*, he calls on everyone to examine their fidelity to authentic tradition:

The particular circumstances, both objective and subjective in which Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre acted, provide everyone with an occasion for a profound reflection and for a renewed pledge of fidelity to Christ and His Church...¹⁵⁴

The outcome of the movement promoted by Monsignor Lefebvre can and must be, for all the Catholic faithful, a motive for sincere reflection concerning their own fidelity to the Church's Tradition, authentically interpreted by the ecclesiastical Magisterium, ordinary and extraordinary, especially in the Ecumenical Councils from Nicea to Vatican II. From this reflection all should draw a renewed and efficacious conviction of the necessity of strengthening still more their fidelity by rejecting erroneous interpretations and arbitrary and unauthorized applications in matters of doctrine, liturgy, and discipline.¹⁵⁵

To the bishops it especially pertains, by reason of their pastoral mission, to exercise the important duty of clear-sighted vigilance full of charity and firmness, so that this fidelity may be everywhere safeguarded¹⁵⁶

Had the "erroneous interpretations and unauthorized applications in matters of doctrine and liturgy" been firmly dealt with by a vigilant discipline evinced by the "decisiveness required of [the] public authority"¹⁵⁷ seated in Rome during the years the post-Conciliar crisis was fomenting and then obeyed by *all* bishops maintaining fidelity to tradition, the schism of 1988, and much more besides, might have been averted. This is not a polemic observation: many excellent papal directives go unheeded because there is little executive enforcement of them. Problems in every area of Church life go unchecked because effective measures are not employed against their continuation.

On this painful occasion the Holy Father firmly called *all* bishops to do their duty. They are to maintain a firm, charitable vigilance in assuring that fidelity to Catholic tradition be everywhere safeguarded. Here is the heart of the matter since the schism had finally erupted over the eventually mistaken vigilance of one bishop defending generally solid principles and practices, but in an atmosphere where a sympathetic embrace of ecclesial tradition in all its variety was not well

¹⁵⁴ John Paul II, *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta*, 2, 2 July 1988, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 11 July 1988, No. 28, 1. [cf. Appendix]

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 5a

¹⁵⁶ *Ibidem.*

¹⁵⁷ *Gaudium et Spes*, 31, in Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*.

appreciated by others. Quite accurately Cardinal Ratzinger commented, “after the Council, many consciously made *desacralization* a program of action”.¹⁵⁸ In view of this fact, Archbishop Lefebvre often stated his determination to maintain the dignity of Catholic worship and truth of doctrine that he had spent his entire lifetime honorably doing as a priest and bishop.

Archbishop Lefebvre was not categorically wrong on all accounts. Rome had sought long and hard to effect a reconciliation of his movement, recognizing in it many positive elements and participants truly loyal to the Church. This reason is why such effort was made to overcome, in a non-judgmental manner, earlier mistakes and heated aggressions that had taken place on all sides in the worst years of post-conciliar tension. By 1988, however, the situation in the Church at large had still not changed significantly in the Archbishop’s view. What is more, the Pope’s 1984 measures regarding the old liturgy were ignored and there remained many unresolved issues in its regard. In Archbishop Lefebvre’s thinking, the whole fabric of post-Conciliar problems were increasingly knit into the new praxis regarding ecumenism and freedom of religion. This he could not, in conscience, subscribe to. In every sense of the term, the schism was a tragedy – particularly in view of the prelate’s long record of service to the Papacy and his deep love of the faith and the Church.

Regarding liturgy in the Church at large, the admonitions and apology once made by Pope John Paul II in *Dominicae Cenaе* seemed to have borne little fruit in curbing the abuses he had decried. In that light, the old liturgy with its attendant books and concomitant doctrinal coherence continued to provide a strong assurance of authenticity for many who were absolutely at wits end with the increasing incoherence of their parish life. For all practical purposes the old rite of Mass was still outlawed almost everywhere in the world, while in many places the liturgical situation was aggravated by the long absence of effective correction. These dynamics were, and remain, key operatives in the well-organized Lefebvre movement which avidly supplies the classic liturgy and dispenses a conservative catechesis. The faithful who chose (choose) to assist at Mass in the Lefebvre chapels tended (tend) to favor the immediate solution of “this liturgy, this catechism is *Catholic*: what Fr. X is doing is *not*.” Right or wrong it was (is) a pastoral reality and His Holiness had already recognized the simmering crisis in *Dominicae Cenaе* when he stated,

¹⁵⁸ Ratzinger, “Speech to the Bishops of Chile”, 7.

Above all I wish to emphasize that the problems of the liturgy, and in particular the Eucharistic Liturgy, must not be an occasion for dividing Catholics and for threatening the unity of the Church...¹⁵⁹

Historical conditions pose the obvious question, of course: Which is more divisive – adherence to the old liturgy because it was sacred, coherent, historical, and orthodox though generally forbidden, or submission to the direct and indirect problems of the whole new orientation when little seemed (seems) to be happening to bring parishes and other institutions back into order? For some this crisis ended in the 1988 schism, a resolution which must always remain untenable for Catholics.

Indicative, however, of the degree of division well-entrenched in the Church by the time the schism occurred were the voices expressing delight that it had finally happened. The proponents of this appalling position claimed that the Church was finally rid of one particular group of “reactionaries.”¹⁶⁰ It should be noted that such persons rarely extended the charity or justice of actually *listening* to any of the grievances involved, nor did (do) they understand the gravity of such a wound to the Mystical Body of Christ. At the same time progressive elements in the Church cried out indignantly that the Archbishop had been given “everything he wanted” while they had been abused by Church authorities.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ John Paul II, *Dominicae Cenaе*, 13.

¹⁶⁰ Ratzinger, “Speech to the Bishops of Chile”, 4. “A Christian neither can nor should rejoice over a schism.”

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 1. “The sequence of events has given the lie to these assertions.” An extreme example of the “left” side of the polarization over Lefebvre’s alleged “easy treatment for disobedience” can be seen in the “Stallings affair” of the following year, 1989. (Cf. George Stallings, “Letter to Black Catholic Clergy”, *Origins*, Vol. 19, No. 14, 7 September, 1989, 239, 240.)

In response to being suspended *a divinis* for creating the “Imani Temple of the African-American Catholic Congregation”, Washington DC based priest, Fr. George Stallings, issued a letter to black Catholic priests in America. He expressed indignation over his “biased” treatment for disobedience citing leniency towards Lefebvre as an example of hierarchical double standards: “The events of recent weeks have been dramatic. Since all of us who minister within the African-American community are forced to be participants in these events, I want you, my brothers, to know what led up to the Imani Temple of the African-American Catholic congregation.”

“...Regardless of what others say, I am a Catholic priest. And that priesthood must be expressed through my African-American self. Unlike Archbishop Lefebvre, I affirm Vatican II and all its missiology. While I can understand Cardinal Hickey’s suspension of me as coming out of a sincere mindset that merges order and peace, authority and right, it stands in stark contrast to the treatment of Lefebvre and those who follow him. A recent article in the NCR reports that not only has Rome instituted a conservative religious society to attract Lefebvrites [sic], but that Rome has also approved the founding of conservative congregations over the heads of diocesan bishops. I am black, and African American, and a priest; Lefebvre is white and an archbishop. Yet the forbearance and respect he received for those 25 years of defiance to the teachings of a plenary council of the Church is not given an African-American priest who insists that the American Catholic Church has waited too long to honor the missiology of those council fathers. It is not me that my church and

It is needless to add that Pope John Paul II possesses a far more encompassing and pastorally sensitive view of the situation than those anxious for the Catholic Church to be rid of “traditionalist” voices. Even though the situation in the Church could not be appreciably changed at large, the immediate aggravating cause for some caught in this crisis *could* be remedied; this was particularly urgent because of the immediate attraction of what the schismatic movement was offering. Thus the measures of *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta* were directed not only towards those involved in the schism, but to any who were potentially subject to its appeal. The remedy was accomplished by allowing a free use of the old liturgy of the Roman Rite, a simple diversity in practice in an area that did not affect faith or morals. The measure has long historical precedent. Since pluralism in forms of worship “far from diminishing the Church’s unity, rather serves to emphasize it,”¹⁶² and, “the Catholic Church wishes the traditions of each particular church or rite to remain whole and entire,”¹⁶³ and,

...the Church, in all areas that do not affect her general welfare or the Faith, does not wish to impose a strict uniformity, not even in the liturgy; on the contrary she fosters the distinctive traits and gifts of the various peoples, and develops them...¹⁶⁴

the Pope, in his Motu Proprio *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta*, granted an indult against the use of the normative liturgy of the Roman Rite that provides free access to the former liturgical discipline for those who want it. The reason he did this was to ensure that the liturgy – the heart and soul of the Catholic Church, her life, faith, and spirituality – would cease being the occasion of gross scandal and division as had been experienced by so many people. *Judgment and the assignment of blame on any side of the issue were purposely left out of the measure and play no role in its implementation.* It is a pastoral instrument that takes into consideration the completely Catholic value of the “previous liturgical discipline” without rehashing the guilt found on every side in the

archdiocese must be reconciled with but rather the teachings of Vatican II.”

The suspended priest’s complaint over the “stark contrast” he received in treatment compared to the “forbearance and respect” shown Lefebvre concluded in a manner that must have appeased Fr. Stallings’ sense of outraged justice. The “black priest” finally received the same impartial treatment as that accorded the “white Archbishop” when Stallings was excommunicated for contriving to have himself consecrated a “bishop” in the schismatic Old Catholic Church of Utrecht.

Polarization over the “Lefebvre affair” is often coupled onto legitimate requests seeking the liturgical provision of *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta* and has not abated significantly over the past ten years. (cf. footnote ¹⁷⁴.)

¹⁶² *OE*, 2.

¹⁶³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶⁴ *SC*, 37.

complex circumstances aggravating the rupture. There is no politicization of the question, and the subsequent efforts by many to do so *are alien to the Pope's clear intentions*.¹⁶⁵ What is more, the *Novus Ordo Missae*, established by law as the Roman Church's normative liturgy, is not brought into question and the principle of a continued authentic reform is in no way undermined.

The Pope does, however, make very clear the manner in which Catholics attached to the old rites are to be understood and treated:

To all those Catholics who feel attached to some previous liturgical and disciplinary forms of the Latin tradition I wish to manifest my will to facilitate their ecclesial communion by means of the necessary measures to guarantee respect for their rightful aspirations. In this matter I ask for the support of the bishops and of all those engaged in the pastoral ministry of the Church... Moreover respect must be everywhere shown for the feelings of all those who are attached to the Latin liturgical tradition by a wide and generous application of the directives already issued...for use of the *Missale Romanum* according to the typical edition of 1962.¹⁶⁶

What is more, the Pope calls upon everyone in the Church to,

...have a new awareness, not only of the lawfulness but of the richness for the Church of a diversity of charisms, traditions, and spirituality and apostolate, which also constitute the beauty of unity in variety: of that blended 'harmony' which the earthly Church raises up to Heaven under the impulse of the Holy Spirit.¹⁶⁷

Therefore, through this *Motu Proprio* Pope John Paul II has clearly and publicly informed the whole of the Catholic Church that the "previous liturgical and disciplinary forms of the Latin tradition" as codified in the *Missale Romanum* of 1962 are:

- Lawful
- Part of the Church's richness
- Indicative of a certain charism and spiritual tradition
- Seat of a variety of apostolates
- Part of the beauty of the one Church's variety
- A voice in the blended "harmony" which the Church raises to heaven
- An impulse of the Holy Spirit

For that reason the Pope stated that:

- Attachment to these traditions is lawful

¹⁶⁵ Cf. footnote ¹⁷⁴.

¹⁶⁶ John Paul II, *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta*, 5c, referring to the letter from the Sacred Congregation of Worship, *Quattuor Abhinc Annos*, 3 October 1984 (AAS 76 (1984) 1088,1089.)

¹⁶⁷ John Paul II, *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta*, 5a.

- Measures are now established to guarantee respect for persons' rightful aspirations in their regard
- Respect is to be shown everywhere, and by everyone, towards persons desirous of these older usages of the Roman Rite

Furthermore, due to the situation being addressed by this Motu Proprio, the Pope informs the Church that the measure has been undertaken to:

- Facilitate ecclesial union for the people it affects

To which effect he directs that:

- Bishops and all others engaged in pastoral work are to cooperate with the initiative by implementing its directives.

In October 1984 the Pope had already granted an approval for a restricted use of the 1962 edition of the *Missale Romanum* through the letter *Quattuor Adhinc Annos* issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship. That measure had been received and implemented with a decided lack of enthusiasm on the part of most bishops.¹⁶⁸ In referring to this earlier document in *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta*, Pope John Paul called for its “wide and generous application”¹⁶⁹ in order to alleviate the crisis over the liturgy still felt by any and all that were so affected. The whole thrust of *Ecclesia Dei* relaxes the restrictions of the earlier indult. It seeks to positively help members of the Church by generously providing means for what they need as faithful Catholics.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Cf. “Tridentine Mass Permission Criticized”, *Origins*, Vol. 14, No. 21, 8 November 1984, 334, 335. The permission to allow the 1962 *Missale*, even in a restricted manner, was met with indignation by representatives of 32 English speaking episcopal conferences. This was manifest in the resolutions addressed to the Presidents and Secretaries of National Liturgical Commissions held in Rome between October 23 and 28, 1984. Their “grave concern, regret and dismay” expressed that “the concession appears to be a movement away from the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council with its insistence on the active involvement of the whole people of God (according to the different functions and ministries) in the eucharistic celebration” and that the Pope’s recent “division of the Congregation of the Sacraments and Divine Worship posed a potential threat to the ongoing work of liturgical renewal because of a seeming return to a preconiliar understanding of the sacraments.” The resolution ended by requesting, among other things, “reaffirming the *Magna Charta* of liturgical adaptation [sic], *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nos. 37-40 [making no mention of article 36 or any of the others relating to it]” and “encouraging the re-establishment of centers of liturgical experimentation and adaptation on the level of the local church”.

¹⁶⁹ John Paul II, *Ecclesia Dei*, 6c.

¹⁷⁰ The former Pro-Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship, Augustin Cardinal Mayer, had been responsible for issuing *Quattuor Abhinc Annos*. He was appointed the first President of the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*, set up by Pope John Paul for the implementation of the Motu Proprio of the same name. In April of 1990, the Cardinal sent a letter to the Bishops in the United States in which he said, “a *Commissio Cardinalitia ad hoc ipsum instituta* charged with reviewing the use made of this indult [*Quattuor Abhinc Annos*] met in December of 1986. At that time the Cardinals unanimously agreed that the conditions laid down in *Quattuor Abhinc Annos* were too restrictive and should be relaxed.” This relaxation was effected through the Motu Proprio *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta*, in which the Pope

In this vein it is important to note that there are no age limits or other restrictions qualifying the persons to whom the *Motu Proprio* applies. There is no expiration for its conditions nor an exclusion of persons having had no association with the schism which occasioned it. In a word, it is *generous* and it is meant to be *generously conceded* by the bishops to those whom it concerns. The fundamental reason for the whole of the measure is to promote the unity of the Church and to benefit the faithful. This is effected through a specific disciplinary provision for a sizable group of people attached to a particular liturgical tradition and the spiritual identity that their aspirations represent. The Pope says, in fact, that what they are seeking after is nothing less than “an impulse of the Holy Spirit”.¹⁷¹

For this portion of the People of God, of whom John Paul II is also Shepherd, provision has been made that genuinely reflects the universality of Catholicism, the full embrace of authentic tradition and at least one effective resolution for some of those who have experienced the “at times partial, one-sided and erroneous application of the directives of the Second Vatican Council”.¹⁷² This the Pope did by a personal, pastoral, disciplinary intervention directed to the clergy and laity, and capable of obviating in the circumstances at hand the long “scandal and disturbance concerning

called for the “wide and generous application of the directives already issued”. For that reason, and in light of the decidedly frigid manner with which this latest “Latin Mass” indult was being received throughout the world, the President of the *Ecclesia Dei* Commission wrote the American bishops to encourage their implementation of it. In it Cardinal Mayer said, “consequently, Your Excellency, we wish to encourage you to facilitate the proper and reverent celebration of the liturgical rites according to the Roman Missal of 1962 wherever there is a genuine desire for this on the part of priests and the faithful”. (Cf. “Letter to the American Bishops”, in *Canonical Proposal of the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Peter*, 65-68.) The letter spells out various ways that this can be done including, “There is no reason now why the so-called Tridentine Mass cannot be celebrated in a parish church where this would be a genuine pastoral service to the faithful asking for it.” It is in light of this consideration that the rotating schedules for the “Tridentine Mass” set up in some dioceses actually undermines the fruitful intentions envisioned by the Pope. The indult of the older liturgy is supposed to be of *service* to the faithful and that is not accomplished when conceded only through an erratic schedule of Masses, at widely varying times, scattered among different churches and celebrated by a series of different priests. There are instances when the priest appointed is clearly hostile to the liturgy and people he is meant to serve. These factors invariably cause attendance to fall off; afterward the claim is then made that there was “no real interest” in the measure, and the Masses are canceled. Interest is manifest and ongoing when the measure is effected in a central and convenient location with a normal Mass schedule at normal times, and by priests who take it to heart as a genuine pastoral work. (This point was specifically addressed in Cardinal Mayer’s letter to the American bishops.) *Nowhere* in the *Motu Proprio* is there any directive or undertone for using it to make people *desist* in their attachment to the former liturgical discipline. The whole measure is suffused with a spirit to the contrary. What is more, in virtue of *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta* the “older liturgical discipline” has been rendered a “current liturgical discipline” for the good of certain persons among the faithful and therefore for the good of Church at large. In every way this measure is meant by the Pope to be applied *widely* and *generously* by the bishops of the Church.

¹⁷¹ John Paul II, *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta*, 5a.

¹⁷² John Paul II, *Dominicae Cenaee*, 12.

the interpretation of the doctrine and veneration due to this great Sacrament”¹⁷³ which many had undergone for years on end.

The Motu Proprio has been vilified and ignored, often conceded only grudgingly or refused altogether.¹⁷⁴ Sadly, scandal with the liturgy has continued apace. These are examples of open disobedience to the lawful will of the Pope and qualitatively no different from the disobedience that enabled some to continue possessing the old liturgy during the long years of turmoil. The *ratio* for

¹⁷³ Ibidem.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. Joseph Ratzinger, “Dix Ans du Motu Proprio *Ecclesia Dei*,” Public conference given at the Palace Ergife, Rome, Italy, October 24, 1998, as part of the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the promulgation of the Motu Proprio *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta*. (Rome: unpublished manuscript, 1998). The Cardinal began his conference by setting out the *status questionis*: “...in many places the difficulties persist [for those who seek canonical permission for the older liturgy] and continue to persist because so many of the bishops and priests and faithful consider this attachment to the old liturgy an element of division which only troubles the ecclesial community and which gives rise to suspicions that there is only a “reserved acceptance” of the Council and, more generally, of the obedience due the Church’s legitimate pastors.”

He then demonstrated that these two misconceptions are based on a deficient understanding of the Council’s guidelines for the celebration of liturgy itself: “What is the profound reason of this distrust or even refusal for the continuation of the ancient forms of the liturgy? ...The two reasons that one hears the most often are the lack of obedience to the Council that wanted the liturgical books reformed, and the rupture of unity which would necessarily follow if one were to allow different liturgical forms to be used. ...It is relatively easy to theoretically refute these two reasons. The Council itself did not reform the liturgical books, rather it ordered a revision to which end it established certain fundamental rules. Before all else the Council gave a definition of what the liturgy is, and this definition gives a sound criterion for every liturgical celebration. If one were to despise these essential rules and put to the side these “general norms” which are found in articles 34-36 [of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*], then one would be in disobedience of the Council! It is in relation to these criteria, therefore, that it is necessary to judge liturgical celebrations, whether they be from the old books or according to the new.” In examining the second argument the Cardinal states there is both a theoretical and a practical aspect to the question. He treats the theoretical one first: “Several forms of the Roman Rite have always existed...the most known was the Dominican Rite. No one was ever scandalized that the Dominicans, often present in our parishes, didn’t celebrate like the parish priests, but that they had their own proper rite. We had no doubt that their rite was just as Catholic as the Roman Rite, and we were proud of this richness of having several diverse traditions.” He then examines the practical aspect of the question: “The aversions [towards different usages in the Roman Church] are so great because one puts the two forms of celebration together with two different spiritual attitudes, in fact two different manners of perceiving the Church and of perceiving the Christian life, period. The reasons for this are many. The first is as follows: the two liturgical forms are judged from external elements and one arrives thus at the following conclusion: there are two fundamentally different attitudes.” He goes on to list the outward norms expected of the two usages: Latin/vernacular, orientation/facing the congregation, strict directives/innovation, etc. He continues: “From this angle phenomenology is essential for a liturgy, not just that it be considered in and of itself...none of this comes either from the spirit nor the letter of the texts of the Council.”

The Cardinal continued by examining the nature of liturgy itself, pointing out the *phenomenological deficiencies of both liturgical ensembles when celebrated inadequately*, observing that the deficiency in celebrating the former probably hastened its demise where the liturgical movement had not had a strong impact. He contrasted that with the increasing disgust felt for the rationalism, pragmatism and banality so often involved in the liturgical changes. He concluded by calling for *a return to right principles and a reconciliation of both usages in the practice of those principles*, looking towards a future wherein different accents in different rites still remain, but where right liturgical sense would be manifest in the correct use of all the worship traditions at use in the Church. This, he insists, is the authentic mind of the Council and the course of action that should be followed by everyone in the Church today.

the two manners of disobedience are, however, quite different. The object of the former will never be sanctioned while the object of the latter should never have been removed. A miserable example of the present problem is stated by Cardinal Ratzinger in *Salt of the Earth*:

I am of the opinion to be sure that the old rite should be granted much more generously to all those who desire it. It is impossible to see what could be dangerous or unacceptable about that... What we need is a new liturgical education, especially of priests. It must once again become clear that liturgical scholarship does not exist in order to produce constantly new models, though that may be all right for the automobile industry. It exists in order to introduce us into feast and celebration, to make man capable of mystery. Here we ought to learn not just from the Eastern Church but from all religions of the world, which all know that liturgy is something other than the invention of texts and rites, that it lives precisely from what is beyond manipulation. Young people have a very strong sense of this. Centers in which the liturgy is celebrated reverently and nobly without nonsense attract, even if one doesn't understand every word. We need such centers to set an example. Unfortunately, in Germany tolerance for bizarre tinkering is almost unlimited, whereas tolerance for the old liturgy is practically nonexistent. We are surely on the wrong path in that regard.¹⁷⁵

Against such a backdrop is Pope John Paul's continued support of the pastoral measure. On October 26, 1998, he again made public appeal for the bishops to implement the *Motu Proprio*. In a discourse to several thousand priests and faithful come to Rome for a week's celebration for the anniversary of *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta* the Pope said,

I cordially welcome you dear pilgrims who have undertaken coming to Rome on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the *Motu Proprio Ecclesia Dei* to affirm and renew your faith in Christ, and your fidelity to the Church...I exhort all Catholics to undertake gestures of unity and to renew their adherence to the Church to the end that legitimate diversity and different sensibilities, worthy of respect, do not separate one from the other, but lead them towards proclaiming the Gospel together. ...The Church has given a sign of understanding to persons "attached to certain previous liturgical forms and disciplines" (*Motu Proprio Ecclesia Dei Adflicta*, 5). It is in this perspective that one must read and apply the *Motu Proprio*... I also cordially invite the bishops to have an understanding and a renewed pastoral concern for the faithful attached to the old rite, at the threshold of the third millennium, to help all Catholics live the celebration of the Holy Mysteries with a devotion that may be a true nourishment for their spiritual life and which may be a source of peace.¹⁷⁶

In those places where the Pope's will has been respected with the generosity and

¹⁷⁵ Ratzinger, *Salt of the Earth*, 177.

¹⁷⁶ John Paul II, "Discourse to the Members of the *Fraternitas Sacerdotalis Sancti Petri* on the Tenth Anniversary of the *Motu Proprio Ecclesia Dei*", *L'Osservatore Romano*, Anno CXXXVIII, No. 248, 26 October 1998, 8.

comprehension he called for, the consistency of worship and doctrine inherent in a correct deployment of the classical Roman liturgy has helped establish solid and vibrant Catholic faith, piety, and peace among persons fully attached to the Church.¹⁷⁷

Unity in diversity, a recognition of the attachment of a considerable group of people to a particular liturgical patrimony, a canonical provision to assure their identity – all are elements in this classic measure for securing stable ecclesial union.

Pope John Paul addressed the Benedictine monks from the Abbey of Ste. Madeleine, Le Barroux, France, at Castel Gondolfo in September 1990. This community radiates an enormous influence over thousands of young Catholics in France and elsewhere. In his address the Pope makes reference to a reason for allowing their use of the old rites by quoting the documents of Vatican II. After praising their zealous work in bringing many others back into union with Rome, the Holy Father stated,

The Holy See has permitted your monastery to make use of the liturgical books in use in 1962, in order to meet the expectations of those “who feel bound to certain earlier forms of liturgical and disciplinary expressions of the Latin tradition.” (*Ecclesia Dei Adflicta*, 5c.) In this way the Holy See has upheld what the Council document defines concerning the liturgy when it recalls that...“the Church...does not wish to impose a strict uniformity, not even in the liturgy...” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 37.) Far from wishing to hinder the implementation of post-conciliar reform in any way, this permission is meant to render ecclesiastical communion easier for persons who feel bound to these liturgical forms.¹⁷⁸

It is significant that the liturgical provisions of *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta* lean on principles enunciated by the Council and that this is referenced by one no less than the Pope himself. For as Cardinal Ratzinger has said, “The only way to make Vatican II credible is to present it clearly as what it is: part of the whole single Tradition of the Church and of its faith.”¹⁷⁹ The continued living use of the classic Roman liturgy is in complete harmony with the Church’s tradition and faith, and conforms to the intentions of the Second Vatican Council.

¹⁷⁷ It is also important to note, from a pastoral perspective, such places are far from being centers filled with elderly “nostalgics” as widely assumed. They are characterized by a very high percentage of young Catholics with large families who are genuinely moved by the spiritual richness of a liturgy most of them had never experienced before. Because they have no memory of the “old rite” set within the framework of the “old days” they also have no predispositions in its regard. The most common reaction of young people experiencing the old rite for the first few times is, “Why would any one have ever wanted to get rid of this? It is so beautiful and prayerful.”

¹⁷⁸ Pope John Paul II, “Pius X Fraternity Invited by Pope to End Schism”, *L’Osservatore Romano*, English edition, No. 41, 8 October 1990, 6.

¹⁷⁹ Ratzinger, “Speech to the Bishops of Chile”, 9.

The liturgy would never have been pivotal in a crisis ending in schism had there been a consistent application of the principles for its authentic reform as laid down by the Council Fathers. To render the Council credible, therefore, its principles must be adhered to within the context of the whole of Catholic history and practice. These need explanation and implementation by persons obedient to the authentic role of the theologian, and who possess genuine expertise in the various areas concerned while being united to the authority of the Pope and his government. Those who have recourse to *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta* act accordingly and are obedient to the Council in the process.

No less important for rendering the Council credible is understanding it *sitz in leben* – its historical context of the mid 1960s. This was shared by all who participated in it and imparts a particular color to everything it said and did. The implementation of the Council’s directives can not, therefore, be viewed as a constantly evolving process but rather as the unfolding of its actual content in conformity with tradition and understood within its own historical context. To implement the will of the Council requires a sensitive knowledge of the Catholic Church’s actual condition in the years its principles were formulated, coupled with fidelity to the vision its directives express.

In regard to public worship, most of the Council Fathers celebrated the Latin Gregorian liturgy daily without finding it strange or irrelevant. From their directives it is clear that reform was to be in continuity with the tradition they themselves were practicing, and that without its rupture or ruin. Since there has been, in practice, a breach of such an integrated understanding of the Council’s will, the liturgical problems discredit the Council itself in the eyes of many. This has happened by an inauthentic and widespread attempt to render the Council, as Cardinal Ratzinger says, “the end of tradition and a starting over from zero...the “super dogma” which makes the rest unimportant.”¹⁸⁰

In light of such a distortion, the liturgical provisions of *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta* are an especially effective means for promoting a more historically balanced understanding of the Council and its continuity with tradition.

¹⁸⁰ Ratzinger, “Speech to the Bishops of Chile”, 9.

C. The Lasting Effects of the Motu Proprio

It is in regard to the relationship of the Church and tradition that *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta* has a greater impact than its immediate pastoral value of promoting unity among certain Catholics involved in schism.

The continued, living presence of the *Vetus Ordo* of the Roman liturgy quite palpably demonstrates the Church's unbroken continuity within the whole of her cultic practice and theological heritage. This is further enhanced by a growing clergy specifically trained in the liturgical tradition which it represents while possessing otherwise typical associations with all else touching on modern Catholic life and priesthood.

For most Catholics making use of this measure, the classical Roman Liturgy restores an unstrained, easily perceived continuity with the received past of the Church's faith and practice. However neither they, nor the priests who celebrate the older Latin rites, are nostalgic museum pieces since both are intimately joined to the hierarchy and living magisterium of the Church of today. The Church is a living organism whose life is *now*: it is neither arrested in the past nor displaced into the future. Priests and faithful who use this liturgical discipline are, like all others, involved in the *present, living, ecclesial mission of Jesus Christ*.

In regard to establishing canonical regularity, *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta* makes the important provision of a commission through which entire religious congregations fallen into schism can be reconciled to the Church with their life and traditions intact. This commission also oversees the establishment of new religious congregations as well as being the means by which already established ones may return to the older liturgical forms if they so desire.¹⁸¹

In all these cases, like the liturgical provision itself, there are no time limits or age restrictions. The provisions are permanent and this is evident in the foundation of a variety of religious congregations for men and the seminaries they operate for the specialized training of their own members. Since formation is vital and the Council solicitous that priests be knowledgeable of their own patrimonies, it was foreseen that such societies would not only use the older Latin liturgy as the norm in their religious life and pastoral work, it would also be a fundamental element in their

¹⁸¹ The fact that few previously established congregations petitioned to return to the earlier discipline

own priestly formation.

Such congregations, apart from the obvious importance of the consecrated life of their members, provide effective ministries – sacramental, spiritual and psychological – to the faithful who frequent the sacraments as celebrated through these usages.

For the faithful who are allowed use of this Motu Proprio, the provision for specially trained priests is most important. These priests, like their religious congregations and the faithful who come to them, are bound by determined lines of authority and faculties duly conceded. Such priests are indispensable elements in the pastoral measure since it seeks a concrete ecclesial redress between the faithful involved and the Church at large.

The role played by the priest in this measure is not liturgical, *simpliciter*. His purpose is the strengthening of ecclesial unity, accomplished by re-establishing a trust once diminished between his subjects and the hierarchy, to the end that he may form them by genuine Catholic instruction. This is initiated through his sincere celebration of the liturgy to which these faithful are attached. Through it he reconciles those divided from the Church over liturgical issues while preventing others tempted towards schism for similar reasons. The essential goal is unity through ritual variety – diversity in non-essentials that facilitates unity in essentials. The priest is central to the process:

The principal instrument in this pastoral work is the priest who has been trained specifically for it. Through his sensitive and sympathetic celebration of the Latin Mass he can win the trust of many people. This enables him eventually to exercise the more difficult task of teaching them. Experience shows that through such measures Catholics who have been disaffected from the Church over these questions (and sometimes with great animosity) can be grafted back into its full communion with the minimum of difficulty.¹⁸²

In providing the conditions established by *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta* the local bishop threatens neither the normative liturgy nor the unity of his diocese.¹⁸³ Instead, he avails himself of the means by which a particular group can be more united to its bishop through the provision of a spiritual and liturgical tradition willed by the Pope and sanctioned by law. By engaging priests from the congregations arisen from the Motu Proprio, the bishop takes advantage of a clergy specifically trained for those who seek such a ministry. The bishop thereby frees himself and his other priests, already overcharged with pastoral work, from having to develop special programs for yet another

demonstrates that this indult does not undermine the normative liturgy in the Church at large.

¹⁸² *Canonical Proposal of the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Peter*, 27.

group in the diocese. This is made even more complicated by their need to know another liturgical usage. Experience shows that misconceptions and apprehensions on the part of diocesan clergy towards such priests are dispelled as knowledge and friendship with them is gained up once they join the presbyterate in its common pastoral responsibilities.

¹⁸³ Cf. footnote ¹⁷⁴.

IV. CONCLUSION

While recourse to the liturgical measures provided by *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta* is only one kind of solution in the face of current problems in the Church, it is one that falls entirely within the authentic expression of historical Catholicism and the provision of law now in force. Based on a long tradition of similar provisions for restoring ecclesial unity, it has proven effective in obtaining a variety of concrete results. The continued existence of the classical Roman liturgy and all that goes with it shows itself to be an important element in life and work undertaken by the Catholic Church in the modern era.

Within this framework, therefore, the value of the old Latin liturgy is significant in four ways:

- It promotes the unity of the Church.
- It conforms to the liturgical principles of the Council.
- It witnesses to the Church's unbroken continuity with her past.
- It manifests the lasting value of a rich spiritual and cultural tradition.

For these reasons the living tradition of the *Vetus Ordo Romanus*, celebrated according to the will of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, has a significant role to play in the liturgical, doctrinal, and pastoral witness of today's Catholic Church. Aside from its immediate importance as a means for healing schism, it manifests the full and perfect continuity of holy tradition in the Catholic Church. It accomplishes this not only through the doctrinal integrity of its texts, but in the richness of its cultural ancillaries, so integral to a cosmic worship. This latter is particularly important during a time when a proper sense of history and art's necessity has been obscured in many, rationalist pragmatism and superficial banality having taken their place. The continued use of this rite indicates in a living manner that Vatican II is but a stage in the continuous fabric of the Church's history and *not* a point of embarkation before which nothing is of importance or value. Finally, from a doctrinal point of view, the living use of this rite bears a corroborative witness to the Church's Magisterium, particularly in its liturgical representation of eucharistic faith and theology deriving, as it does, from the Apostolic era itself.

In the light of these considerations, I believe that the liturgical value of Pope John Paul II's Motu Proprio *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta* contributes significantly to the mission of Christ in the world today and to all those who look to the Church for faith and spiritual sustenance.

APPENDICES:

Congregation for Divine Worship: Letter *Quattuor Abhinc Annos*, issued 3 October 1984 to the Bishops of the Church granting permission for use of the 1962 *Missale Romanum*.

(English translation taken from *Origins*, Vol. 14, No. 19, 25 October 1984, 290.)

Your Excellency,

Four years ago, at the direction of Pope John Paul II, the bishops of the entire Church were invited to submit a report on the following topics:

- The manner in which the priests and the people of their dioceses, in observance of the decrees of Vatican Council II, have received the Roman Missal promulgated by authority of Pope Paul VI;

- Problems arising in connection with the implementation of the liturgical reform;

- Opposition to the reform that may need to be overcome.

The results of this survey were reported to all the bishops of the world, the problem of those priests and faithful who had remained attached to the so-called Tridentine Rite seemed to have been almost completely resolved.

But the problem perdures and the Pope wishes to be responsive to such groups of priests and faithful. Accordingly, he grants to diocesan bishops the faculty of using an indult on behalf of such priests and faithful. The diocesan bishop may allow those who are explicitly named in a petition submitted to him to celebrate Mass by use of the 1962 *editio typica* of the Roman Missal. The following norms must be observed.

A. There must be unequivocal, even public evidence that the priest and people petitioning have no ties with those who impugn the lawfulness and doctrinal soundness of the Roman Missal promulgated in 1970 by Pope Paul VI.

B. The celebration of Mass in question must take place exclusively for the benefit of those who petition it; the celebration must be in a church or oratory designated by the diocesan bishop (but not in parish churches, unless, in extraordinary circumstances, the bishop allows this); the celebration may take place only on those days and in those circumstances approved by the bishop, whether for an individual instance or as a regular occurrence.

C. The celebration is to follow the Roman Missal of 1962 and must be in Latin.

D. In the celebration there is to be no intermingling of the two missals.

E. Each bishop is to inform this congregation of the concessions he grants and, one year from the date of the present indult, of the outcome of its use.

The Pope, who is the father of the entire Church, grants this indult as a sign of his concern for all his children. The indult is to be used without prejudice to the liturgical reform that is to be observed in the life of each ecclesial community.

I take this opportunity of extending my cordial good wishes in the Lord to Your Excellency.

From the Congregation for Divine Worship, 3 October 1984.

Archbishop Augustin Mayer, Pro-Prefect

Archbishop Virgilio Noe, Secretary

John Paul II: Apostolic Letter given Motu Proprio: *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta*, 2 July 1988.
(English translation from *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, No. 28, 11 July 1988, 1.)

1. With great affliction the Church has learned of the unlawful episcopal ordination conferred on June 30 by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, which has frustrated all the efforts made during the previous years to ensure the full communion with the Church of the priestly Society of Saint Pius X founded by the same Archbishop Lefebvre. These efforts, especially intense during recent months, in which the Apostolic See has shown comprehension to the limits of the possible, were all to no avail.¹

2. This affliction was particularly felt by the successor of Peter, to whom in the first place pertains the guardianship of the unity of the Church,² even though the number of people directly involved in these events might be few, since every person is loved by God on his own account and has been redeemed by the Blood of Christ shed on the cross for the salvation of all.

The particular circumstances, both objective and subjective, in which Archbishop Lefebvre acted provide everyone with an occasion for profound reflection and for a renewed pledge of fidelity to Christ and to His Church.

3. In itself this act was one of disobedience to the Roman pontiff in a very grave matter of supreme importance for the unity of the Church, such as is the ordination of bishops whereby the apostolic succession is sacramentally perpetuated. Hence such disobedience – which implies in practice the rejection of the Roman Primacy – constitutes a schismatic act.³ In performing such an act, notwithstanding the formal canonical warning sent to them by the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops last June 17, Archbishop Lefebvre, Bernard Fellay, Bernard Tissier de Mallerais, Richard Williamson and Alfonso de Galarreta have incurred the grave penalty of excommunication envisioned by ecclesiastical law.⁴

4. The root of this schismatic act can be discerned in an incomplete and contradictory notion of tradition. Incomplete, because it does not take into account the living character of tradition, which, as the Second Vatican Council clearly taught, “comes from the Apostles and progresses in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit. There is a growth in insight into the realities and words that are being passed on. This comes about in various ways. It comes through the contemplation and study of believers, who ponder these things in their hearts. It comes from the intimate sense of spiritual realities which they experience. And it comes from the preaching of those who have received, along with their right succession in the episcopate, the sure charism of truth.”⁵

But especially contradictory is a notion of tradition which opposes the universal magisterium of the Church possessed by the bishop of Rome and the body of bishops. It is impossible to remain faithful to the tradition while breaking the ecclesial bond with him to

¹ Cf. Informatory note of June 16, 1988: *L'Osservatore Romano*, English ed., June 27, 1988, pp. 1-2.

² Cf. Vatican Council I, *Pastor Aeternus*, Ch. 3: Denzinger-Schonmetzer 3060.

³ Cf. Code of Canon Law, Canon 751.

⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, Canon 1382.

⁵ Vatican Council II, *Dei Verbum*, 8; cf. Vatican Council I, *Dei Filius*, Ch. 4: DZ 3020.

whom, in the person of the Apostle Peter, Christ Himself entrusted the ministry of unity in His church.⁶

5. Faced with the situation that has arisen, I deem it my duty to inform all the Catholic faithful of some aspects which this sad event has highlighted.

a) The outcome of the movement by Archbishop Lefebvre can and must be, for all the Catholic faithful, a motive for sincere reflection concerning their own fidelity to the Church's tradition, authentically interpreted by the ecclesiastical magisterium, ordinary and extraordinary, especially in the ecumenical councils from Nicaea to Vatican II. From this reflection all should draw a renewed and efficacious conviction of the necessity of strengthening still more their fidelity by rejecting erroneous interpretations and arbitrary and unauthorized applications in matters of doctrine, liturgy and discipline.

To the bishops especially it pertains, by reason of their pastoral mission, to exercise the important duty of a clear-sighted vigilance full of charity and firmness, so that this fidelity may be everywhere safeguarded.⁷

However, it is necessary that all the pastors and the other faithful have a new awareness, not only of the lawfulness but also of the richness for the Church of a diversity of charisms, traditions of spirituality and apostolate, which also constitutes the beauty of unity in variety: of that blended "harmony" which the earthly Church raises up to heaven under the impulse of the Holy Spirit.

b) Moreover, I should like to remind theologians and other experts in the ecclesiastical sciences that they should feel called upon to answer in the present circumstances. Indeed, the extent and depth of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council call for a renewed commitment to deeper study in order to reveal clearly the Council's continuity with tradition, especially in points of doctrine which, perhaps because they are new, have not yet been well understood by some sections of the Church.

c) In the present circumstances I wish especially to make an appeal both solemn and heartfelt, paternal and fraternal, to all those who until now have been linked in various ways to the movement of Archbishop Lefebvre, that they may fulfill the grave duty of remaining united to the Vicar of Christ in the unity of the Catholic Church and of ceasing their support in any way for that movement. Everyone should be aware that formal adherence to the schism is a grave offense against God and carries the penalty of excommunication decreed by the Church's law.⁸

To all those Catholics who feel attachment to some previous liturgical and disciplinary forms of the Latin tradition, I wish to manifest my will to facilitate their ecclesial communion by means of the necessary measures to guarantee respect for their rightful aspirations. In this matter I ask for the support of the bishops and those engaged in the pastoral ministry in the Church.

6) Taking into account the importance and complexity of the problems referred to in this document, by virtue of my apostolic authority I decree the following:

a) A *Commission* is instituted whose task it will be to collaborate with the bishops, with the Departments of the Roman Curia and with the circles concerned, for the purpose of facilitating full ecclesial communion of priests, seminarians, religious communities or

⁶ Cf. Mt. 16:18; Lk. 10:16; *Pastor Aeternus*, Ch. 3: DS 3060.

⁷ Cf. Canon 386; Paul VI, *Quinque Iam Anni*, Dec. 8, 1970. *Acta Apostolorum Sedis* 63 (1971) pp. 97-106.

⁸ Cf. Canon 1364.

individuals until now linked in various ways to the society founded by Archbishop Lefebvre who may wish to remain united to the successor of Peter in the Catholic Church while preserving their spiritual and liturgical traditions in the light of the protocol signed last May 5 by Cardinal Ratzinger and Archbishop Lefebvre.

b) This commission is composed of a cardinal-president and other members of the Roman Curia, in a number that will be deemed opportune according to circumstances.

c) Moreover, respect must everywhere be shown for the feelings of those attached to the Latin liturgical tradition by a wide and generous application of the directives already issued some time ago by the Apostolic See for the use of the Roman Missal according to the typical edition of 1962.⁹

7. As this year specially dedicated to the Blessed Virgin is now drawing to a close, I wish to exhort all to join in unceasing prayer, which the Vicar of Christ, through the intercession of the mother of the Church, addresses to the Father in the very words of the Son: “That they all maybe one!”

Given at Rome, at St. Peter’s, July 2, 1988, the 10th year of the pontificate,
John Paul II

⁹ Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship, *Quattuor Abhinc Annos*, Oct. 3, 1984: AAS 76 (1984) pp. 1088-1089.

Cardinal Ratzinger: Speech to the Bishops of Chile, delivered 13 July 1988.

(English language manuscript quoted from *Canonical Proposal of the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Peter* (Scranton: Privately published, 14 September 1993), 61-64.)

1. In recent months we have devoted much work to the “Lefebvre question” in the effort to create an adequate place inside the Church for his movement. The Holy See has been criticized on all sides for this. People said that Rome has been blackmailed by the threat of schism, that it had not sufficiently defended Vatican II, that while it treated progressives with great severity the rebellious reactionaries were met with excessive compassion. The sequence of events has given the lie to these assertions: the myth of Vatican severity towards progressives’ deviations has been shown to be a figment of the imagination. Until now, there have gone forth nothing but admonitions: in any case no canonical penalties properly speaking have been imposed. The fact that Mgr. Lefebvre finally reneged on an agreement already signed shows that the Holy See, although granting him considerable concessions, had not granted him all the freedom that he wanted. In the fundamental section of the agreement, Mgr. Lefebvre had recognized that he must accept Vatican II and all the statements of the postconciliar Magisterium, in proportion to the authority of each document.

2. It is an obvious contradiction that those who have let slip no opportunity to publicize their disobedience to the Pope and the declarations of the Magisterium of the last twenty years, are exactly those who think that this attitude is too soft and want us to exact a precise obedience to Vatican II. Likewise they claim that the Vatican conceded to Mgr. Lefebvre the right to dissent while denying it to the leaders of the progressive movement. In reality, the only such item stated in the agreement was in fact, according to *Lumen Gentium*, 25, that not all the documents of the Council are of the same rank. Beyond that, the accord as signed specified that all polemics were to be avoided and required a positive attitude of respect for official decisions and declarations.

3. It was further conceded to the Fraternity of St. Pius X that it could present to the Holy See its own difficulties of interpretation and reform in the domain of liturgy and canon law, Rome of course retaining its absolute right of judgment. All this certainly goes to show that Rome in this difficult dialog united generosity in what was negotiable with firmness on the essentials. The very explanation given by Mgr. Lefebvre for his retraction is revealing: he declared that he finally understood that the agreement aimed only at integrating his foundation into the “Church of the Council”. For him, the Catholic Church in communion with the Pope was the “Church of the Council,” which had broken with its past. He seems no longer able to see that it is a question of the Catholic Church with the totality of Tradition, which also includes Vatican II.

4. The problem posed with Mgr. Lefebvre did not end with the break of June 30. It would be too easy to let oneself be carried away by a kind of triumphalism and to think that there is no longer a problem now that he has clearly separated himself from the Church. A Christian neither can nor should rejoice over a schism. Even if no blame can be attached to the Holy See for this act, we must ask ourselves about the errors we have committed and continue to commit. The criteria by which we judge the past, on the basis of the decree on ecumenism of Vatican II, must logically also be applied to the present.

5. One of the fundamental discoveries of the theology of ecumenism is that schisms can only occur in the Church when people cease to live and love certain truths and values of the Christian faith. That truth which has been marginalized becomes autonomous and subsists separated from the totality of the ecclesial structure, around it forms a new movement. A fact which should make us think, is that a good number of people outside the small circle of the members of the Fraternity of Mgr. Lefebvre see in him a sort of guide or at least useful ally. It is not sufficient to invoke political causes, nostalgia, or other secondary cultural reasons; these are not enough to explain the popularity found even and especially with young people, in very diverse countries and places with completely different political and cultural conditions. Certainly a kind of narrow, one-sided viewpoint comes across. But without a doubt one could not imagine a phenomenon of this size which did not draw upon positive elements which generally do not find an adequate field of expression in today's Church.

6. This is why we should consider this situation above all as an opportunity for an examination of conscience. We should seriously question ourselves about the deficiencies of our pastoral work which these events call into question. It is in this way that we can give a place to those who seek and ask for it in the Church, and thus remove any justification for the schism by making it unnecessary from inside the Church.

7. There are three aspects, I think, which have an important role in this question. Several reasons have probably led many people to take shelter in the old liturgy. The main one is that they find there the dignity of the sacred preserved there. After the Council many consciously made *desacralization* a program of action by explaining that the New Testament had abolished the cult of the Temple: the veil of the Temple which was rent asunder at the death of Christ meant, according to them, the end of the sacred. The death of Jesus outside the walls, that is to say in a public place, is the authentic cult from then on. Worship, to the extent that it must be performed, should be expressed in the *non-sacrality* of daily life, in love lived out. Urged on by such reasoning, people have abandoned vestments, stripped the churches as much as possible of the splendor which evokes the sacred, and reduced the liturgy to the language and gestures of ordinary life by means of greetings, public signs of friendship, and similar things.

8. With such theory and practice we have certainly lost sight of the real connection between the Old and New Testaments. We have forgotten that this world is not the Kingdom of God, and that the "Holy One of God" (Din. 6, 9) is still in contradiction against the world; that it is necessary to purify ourselves in order to approach Him; that the *profane*, even after the death and resurrection of Jesus, has not succeeded in become the *holy*. The Risen One appeared to those who opened their hearts to Him, the Holy One; He did not appear to everyone. In this way He created the new place for worship to which we must refer today, the worship which consists in approaching the community of the Risen One, at Whose feet the holy women prostrated themselves to adore Him (Mt. 28, 9). I do not wish to go into this right now; I will limit myself to drawing the conclusion directly: we must restore the sacred to the liturgy. The liturgy is not a party, it is not a meeting for relaxation. The important thing is not that the pastor succeed in producing original ideas or wild imaginings. The liturgy is the thrice holy God coming to us; it is

the burning bush; it is the covenant of God with man in Jesus Christ Who died and rose again. The grandeur of the liturgy is not based upon the fact that it provides an interesting pastime, it consists rather in the act of the Wholly Other, whom we are not capable of summoning, in making Himself tangible. He comes to us because He wishes to. In other words, the essential thing in the liturgy is the mystery which is accomplished in the communal rite of the Church; everything else diminishes it. The faithful are deeply affected by this and feel cheated when mystery is transformed into distraction, when the principal actor in the liturgy is not the living God but the priest or liturgical animator.

9. Defending Vatican II against Mgr. Lefebvre as valid and binding in the Church is a necessary task. However we must acknowledge the narrowness of a vision which isolates Vatican II and thus provokes opposition. Innumerable articles/explanations give the impression that everything changed after the Council, and that everything that went before is now lacking in value or at best, is only valid by its light. The Second Vatican Council is not approached as a part of the whole of the living Tradition of the Church, but as an end of the Tradition and a starting-over from zero. The truth is that the Council did not define any dogma and deliberately desired to express itself at a more modest level, simply as a pastoral council. Nevertheless, there are many who interpret it as almost the *super-dogma* which makes the rest unimportant.

10. This impression is reinforced by some current trends. What used to be considered as the most sacred, the received form of the liturgy, suddenly appears to be the most forbidden and the most safely rejected. No criticism of post-conciliar options is permitted, but when ancient rules are involved or even great truths of the Faith (for example, the corporal virginity of Mary, the bodily resurrection of Jesus, the immortality of the soul, and so on), then no one even reacts any more, or they do so in the mildest possible way. In my own experience as a teacher, I have seen the same bishop who, before the Council, fired an instructor who was orthodox if a bit boorish, unable after the Council to get rid of an instructor who openly denied some of the fundamental truths of the faith.

11. All this leads many people to ask themselves if today's Church is really the same as yesterday's, or if it has been replaced without notice. The only way to make Vatican II credible is to present it clearly as what it is: part of the whole single Tradition of the Church and of its faith.

12. Leaving aside the liturgy, the main point of the conflict today is the attack of Mgr. Lefebvre upon the decrees on religious liberty and the supposed spirit of Assisi. It is here that he draws the line between his position and that of the Catholic Church today. It is not even necessary to state that his statements in this field are unacceptable. Rather than take up his errors, let us ask rather where there is a lack of clarity in our positions. For Mgr. Lefebvre it is a question of fighting ideological liberalism and the relativization of the truth. Obviously, we do not agree with him that the Council's document on religious liberty or the prayer of Assisi – according to the intentions of the Pope – are relativizations. Nevertheless it is true that in the spiritual movement of the post-conciliar period, a neglect, even a suppression of the question of truth has shown itself: perhaps here we touch on a crucial problem of contemporary theology and

pastoral [theology]. If we do not emphasize the truth in preaching our faith, and if this truth is no longer essential for man's salvation, then the missions lose their meaning. In fact, people continue to come to the conclusion that in the future we should only aim at Christians being good Christians, Muslims being good Muslims, Hindus being good Hindus, and so on. But how do we know when someone is a "good" Christian or a "good" Muslim?

13. The idea is rapidly gaining ground in theology that all religions are really only symbols of what is, in the last analysis, the Incomprehensible, and this idea has made great inroads into liturgical practice. Wherever such a phenomenon occurs, faith as such is abandoned, because faith consists in turning to the truth insofar as it is recognized. Therefore we have good reason to return to a correct conception in this area as well.

14. If we manage to show and live the totality of Catholicism in these respects, we may well hope that the schism of Mgr. Lefebvre will not last long.

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