



**Fœderatio Internationalis *Una Voce***

***Positio N. 6***

LITURGICAL PLURALISM  
AND THE EXTRAORDINARY FORM

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### From the General Introduction

These papers, commissioned by the International Federation *Una Voce*, are offered to stimulate and inform debate about the 1962 Missal among Catholics ‘attached to the ancient Latin liturgical tradition’, and others interested in the liturgical renewal of the Church. They are not to be taken to imply personal or moral criticism of those today or in the past who have adopted practices or advocated reforms which are subjected to criticism. In composing these papers we adopt the working assumption that our fellow Catholics act in good will, but that nevertheless a vigorous and well-informed debate is absolutely necessary if those who act in good will are to do so in light of a proper understanding of the issues.

The authors of the papers are not named, as the papers are not the product of any one person, and also because we prefer them to be judged on the basis of their content, not their authorship.

The International Federation *Una Voce* humbly submits the opinions contained in these papers to the judgement of the Church.

### Liturgical Pluralism and the Extraordinary Form: Abstract

The existence of an ‘extraordinary form’ of the Roman Rite has come about by historical contingency, and it may be thought that, in the medium or long term, the ‘ordinary’ and ‘extraordinary’ forms should in some way be amalgamated. The existence of liturgical pluralism in the Church, both in East and West, has never, however, been regarded as an embarrassment, but rather a sign of vitality. This is emphatically confirmed by several documents of the Second Vatican Council and the subsequent magisterium. The ‘ideal’ of liturgical diversity demonstrates, rather than undermines, unity of faith, since different liturgical forms incarnate the faith for different conditions, emphasise different theological insights, and have a role to play in promoting the unity of the Church. The Church has continued to promote existing forms, and even to introduce new ones, up to the present day, and is concerned to protect them from an undue influence by the (ordinary) Roman Rite which would undermine their distinctive contribution to the life of the Church.

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## FIUV Positio 6: Liturgical Pluralism and the Extraordinary Form

### Pluralism in Liturgy and Harmony in Faith

1. Without entering into the question of the future development of the Ordinary Form, the question to be addressed by this paper is whether the existence in the Latin Rite of an extra, 'extraordinary', 'Form' of the Roman Rite is problematic, and therefore something to be overcome if possible, in the short or long term, perhaps by the creation of a single, amalgamated, Form of the Roman Rite.
2. While the coming into existence of two 'Forms' of the Roman Rite can be described as accidental,<sup>1</sup> a multiplicity of liturgical forms in the Church is in itself neither abnormal nor regrettable. It is noteworthy that in *Quo primum* (1570) Pope St Pius V made a strong presumption in favour of the preservation of venerable rites,<sup>2</sup> and the Second Vatican Council, in its Constitution on the Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* affirms,  
in faithful obedience to tradition, the sacred Council declares that holy Mother Church holds all lawfully acknowledged rites to be of equal right and dignity; that she wishes to preserve them in the future and to foster them in every way.<sup>3</sup>

Again:

Even in the liturgy, the Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not implicate the faith or the good of the whole community;<sup>4</sup>

Speaking of the multiplicity of Rites, the Council's Decree *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* affirms that 'the variety within the Church in no way harms its unity; rather it manifests it'.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Benedict XVI 'Letter to Bishops' accompanying the Motu Proprio *Summorum Pontificum* (2007): 'At the time of the introduction of the new Missal, it did not seem necessary to issue specific norms for the possible use of the earlier Missal. Probably it was thought that it would be a matter of a few individual cases which would be resolved, case by case, on the local level. Afterwards, however, it soon became apparent that a good number of people remained strongly attached to this usage of the Roman Rite...'

<sup>2</sup> The adoption of the Roman Missal in preference to a different Rite Usage is only permitted with the unanimous consent of a cathedral or community Chapter and in addition the agreement of the bishop or superior. Pope St Pius V (1570) *Quo primum*: The Roman Missal, in the revised edition of 1570, is to be said in all churches 'saving only those in which the practice of saying Mass differently was granted over two hundred years ago simultaneously with the Apostolic See's institution and confirmation of the church, and those in which there has prevailed a similar custom followed continuously for a period of not less than two hundred years; in which cases We in no wise rescind their prerogatives or customs aforesaid. Nevertheless, if this Missal which We have seen fit to publish be more agreeable to these last, We hereby permit them to celebrate Mass according to this rite, subject to the consent of their bishop or prelate, and of their whole Chapter, all else to the contrary notwithstanding.' ('nisi ab ipsa prima institutione a Sede Apostolica adprobata, vel consuetudine, quae, vel ipsa institutio super ducentos annos Missarum celebrandarum in eisdem Ecclesiis assidue observata sit: a quibus, ut praefatam celebrandi constitutionem vel consuetudinem nequaquam auferimus; sic si Missale hoc, quod nunc in lucem edi curavimus, iisdem magis placeret, de Episcopi, vel Praelati, Capitulique universi consensu, ut quibusvis non obstantibus, juxta illud Missas celebrare possint, permittimus;')

<sup>3</sup> Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 4: 'Traditioni denique fideliter obsequens, Sacrosanctum Concilium declarat Sanctam Matrem Ecclesiam omnes Ritus legitime agnitos aequo iure atque honore habere, eosque in posterum servari et omnimode fovendi velle'

<sup>4</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 37: 'Ecclesia, in iis quae fidem aut bonum totius communitatis non tangunt, rigidam unius tenoris formam ne in Liturgia quidem imponere cupit;'

3. This principle has been manifested historically in the Latin Church with a rich variety of Rites and Usages, both geographically defined (notably the Ambrosian and Mozarabic Rites) and those specific to religious orders. Just as in the Middle Ages the Franciscans used the *Missale Seraphicum* (closely related to the Roman Rite) in areas with local usages, so in modern times (before the Council) Dominican and Premonstratensian parishes maintained their proper liturgical traditions in areas accustomed to the Roman Rite. Today the Eastern Churches are to be found throughout lands ‘prevalently of Latin tradition’;<sup>6</sup> far from this creating a problem, Bl. Pope John Paul II saw in this an opportunity for Latin Catholics to learn about the Eastern Rites.<sup>7</sup> Most recently, Pope Benedict XVI has set in motion the creation of a new Use for members of the Anglican Communion who have been received into full communion with the Holy See. The purpose is

to maintain the liturgical, spiritual and pastoral traditions of the Anglican Communion within the Catholic Church, as a precious gift nourishing the faith of the members of the Ordinariate and as a treasure to be shared.<sup>8</sup>

As Bl. Pope John Paul II wrote, referring to the Second Vatican Council’s Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio*:<sup>9</sup>

we find the strength and enthusiasm to intensify the quest for harmony in that genuine plurality of forms which remains the Church’s ideal.<sup>10</sup>

4. The harmony of faith which underlies the plurality of liturgical forms is emphasised by Pope Benedict XVI in relation to the two forms of the Roman Rite.<sup>11</sup> He immediately goes on to affirm the value, as well as the orthodoxy, of the Extraordinary Form:

What earlier generations held as sacred, remains sacred and great for us too, and it cannot be all of a sudden entirely forbidden or even considered harmful. It

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<sup>5</sup> Decree of the Second Vatican Council *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* 2: ‘ita ut varietas in Ecclesia nedum eiusdem noceat unitati, eam potius declaret’.

<sup>6</sup> Instruction *Il Padre, incomprendibile* (1996) 10

<sup>7</sup> Bl. Pope John Paul II Apostolic Letter *Oriente Lumen* (1995) 24 ‘I believe that one important way to grow in mutual understanding and unity consists precisely in improving our knowledge of one another. The children of the Catholic Church already know the ways indicated by the Holy See for achieving this: to know the liturgy of the Eastern Churches’ (‘Putamus sane magnum pondus ad crescendum in mutua comprehensione atque unitate tribuendum esse meliori mutuae intellegentiae. Catholicae Ecclesiae filii iam noverunt vias quas Sancta Sedes significavit ut ii eiusmodi propositum consequi valeant: liturgiam Ecclesiarum Orientalium noscere [corrected from ‘nascere’]’) (The quoted passage ends with a footnote reference to the Instruction *In Ecclesiasticum Futurorum* (1979) 48

<sup>8</sup> Pope Benedict XVI Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum coetibus* (2009) III

<sup>9</sup> Decree of the Second Vatican Council *Unitatis Redintegratio* 4: ‘All in the Church must preserve unity in essentials. But let all, according to the gifts they have received enjoy a proper freedom, in their various forms of spiritual life and discipline, in their different liturgical rites, and even in their theological elaborations of revealed truth. In all things let charity prevail. If they are true to this course of action, they will be giving ever better expression to the authentic catholicity and apostolicity of the Church.’ (‘In necessariis unitatem custodientes, omnes in Ecclesia, secundum munus unicuique datum, cum in variis formis vitae spiritualis et disciplinae, tum in diversitate liturgicorum rituum, immo et in theologica veritatis revelatae elaboratione, debitam libertatem servent; in omnibus vero caritatem colant. Hac enim agendi ratione ipsi veri nominis catholicitatem simul et apostolicitatem Ecclesiae in dies plenius manifestabunt.’)

<sup>10</sup> *Oriente Lumen* 2: ‘satis iterum virium reperimus ac studii ut ea in veritate ac multiplicitate concordiae augeamus conquisitionem quae Ecclesiae remanet propositum optimum.’

<sup>11</sup> Letter to Bishops accompanying the Motu Proprio *Summorum Pontificum*: ‘There is no contradiction between the two editions of the Roman Missal.’

behoves all of us to preserve the riches which have developed in the Church's faith and prayer, and to give them their proper place.<sup>12</sup>

### The Value of Pluralism

5. Pluralism is the 'ideal' for two notable reasons. First, as the Instruction *Il Padre, incomprendibile* expresses it, echoing *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*<sup>13</sup> and the Instruction *Varietates Legitimae* (1994),<sup>14</sup> different Rites incarnate the faith for differing conditions:

This multiformity of the Eastern liturgies does not harm the unity of the Church at all, but rather reinforces it, allowing it to sink its roots in the concrete reality of a determined time and space.<sup>15</sup>

6. Secondly, *Unitatis Redintegratio* reminds us that different theological traditions, which have their own liturgical expressions, give rise to complementary theological insights.

In the study of revelation East and West have followed different methods, and have developed differently their understanding and confession of God's truth. It is hardly surprising, then, if from time to time one tradition has come nearer to a full appreciation of some aspects of a mystery of revelation than the other, or has expressed it to better advantage. In such cases, these various theological expressions are to be considered often as mutually complementary rather than conflicting.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Letter to Bishops

<sup>13</sup> Decree of the Second Vatican Council *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* 2: 'the variety within the Church in no way harms its unity; rather it manifests it, for it is the mind of the Catholic Church that each individual Church or Rite should retain its traditions whole and entire and likewise that it should adapt its way of life to the different needs of time and place.' ('varietas in Ecclesia nedum eiusdem noceat unitati, eam potius declaret; Ecclesiae enim catholicae hoc propositum est, ut salvae et integrae maneant uniuscuiusque particularis Ecclesiae seu ritus traditiones, eademque pariter vult suam vitae rationem aptare variis temporum locorumque necessitatibus.')

<sup>14</sup> Instruction *Varietates Legitimae* (1994) 4: 'The constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* spoke of the different forms of liturgical adaptation. Subsequently the Magisterium of the Church has used the term inculturation to define more precisely "the incarnation of the Gospel in autonomous cultures and at the same time the introduction of these cultures into the life of the Church." [Note: Bl. John Paul II Encyclical *Slavorum Apostoli* (1985) 21] Inculturation signifies "an intimate transformation of the authentic cultural values by their integration into Christianity and the implantation of Christianity into different human cultures." [Note: Bl. John Paul II Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (1990) 52]

<sup>15</sup> *Il Padre, incomprendibile* 15

<sup>16</sup> *Unitatis Redintegratio* 17: 'Etenim in veritatis revelatae exploratione methodi gressusque diversi ad divina cognoscenda et confitenda in Oriente et in Occidente adhibiti sunt. Unde mirum non est quosdam aspectus mysterii revelati quandoque magis congrue percipi et in meliorem lucem poni ab uno quam ab altero, ita ut tunc variae illae theologicae formulae non raro potius inter se compleri dicendae sint quam opponi.' Cf. *Oriente Lumen* 5: 'The Christian tradition of the East implies a way of accepting, understanding and living faith in the Lord Jesus. In this sense it is extremely close to the Christian tradition of the West, which is born of and nourished by the same faith. Yet it is legitimately and admirably distinguished from the latter, since Eastern Christians have their own way of perceiving and understanding, and thus an original way of living their relationship with the Saviour.' ('Certum enim modum secum importat orientalis traditio suscipiendi intellegendi vivendi Domini Iesu fidem. Ita profecto proxime illa ad christianam accedit Occidentis traditionem quae eadem nascitur aliturque fide. Tamen legitime atque insignite ab illa differt, cum proprium habeat sentiendi percipiendique morem christifidelis orientalis, ac propterea nativam aliquam rationem suae colendae necessitudinis cum Salvatore.') Cf. also *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* 5: '[this Council] solemnly declares that the Churches of the East, as much as

7. Pope Benedict has written of the 1962 Missal as a valuable affirmation of particular truths:

The possibility of so celebrating [sc. using the 1962 Missal] constitutes the strongest, and thus (for them) the most intolerable contradiction of the opinion of those who believe that the faith in the Eucharist formulated by Trent has lost its value.<sup>17</sup>

8. Certain valuable features of the Extraordinary Form are shared with the Anglican Use,<sup>18</sup> and some with the Eastern Rites. The Eastern Rites' appeal to the 'whole human person' in his totality<sup>19</sup> has already been discussed in Positio 2;<sup>20</sup> another feature is fidelity to tradition:

Today we often feel ourselves prisoners of the present. It is as though man had lost his perception of belonging to a history which precedes and follows him. This effort to situate oneself between the past and the future, with a grateful heart for the benefits received and for those expected, is offered by the Eastern Churches in particular, with a clear-cut sense of continuity which takes the name of Tradition and of eschatological expectation.<sup>21</sup>

### Pluralism and Church Unity

9. A different kind of value is represented by the importance of both the Eastern Churches' liturgical traditions, and the Anglican Use, for ecumenism. With this in mind Bl. John Paul II demanded

total respect for the other's dignity without claiming that the whole array of uses and customs in the Latin Church is more complete or better suited to showing the fullness of correct doctrine.<sup>22</sup>

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those of the West, have a full right and are in duty bound to rule themselves, each in accordance with its own established disciplines, since all these are praiseworthy by reason of their venerable antiquity, more harmonious with the character of their faithful and more suited to the promotion of the good of souls.' ('Quamobrem sollemniter declarat, Ecclesias Orientis sicut et Occidentis iure pollere et officio teneri se secundum proprias disciplinas peculiarias regendi, utpote quae veneranda antiquitate commendentur, moribus suorum fidelium magis sint congruae atque ad bonum animarum consulendum aptiores videantur.')

<sup>17</sup> Pope Benedict XVI (Joseph, Cardinal Ratzinger) "The Theology of the Liturgy" in Alcuin Reid (ed.) 'Looking Again at the Question of the Liturgy with Cardinal Ratzinger: Proceedings of the July 2001 Fontgombault Liturgical Conference' (Farnbrough: St Michael's Abbey Press, 2003) pp18-33, p20

<sup>18</sup> Notably, in the recently published calendar, the Season of Septuagesima, the Ember and Rogation Days, and the Octave of Pentecost.

<sup>19</sup> *Oriente Lumen* 11: 'tota sua cum persona'

<sup>20</sup> FIUV Positio 2: 'Liturgical Piety and Participation' 9

<sup>21</sup> *Oriente Lumen* 8: 'Captivos hodie saepius nos temporis praesentis esse sentimus: quasi si notionem homo amiserit sese esse particulam alicuius historiae praecedentis et subsequentis. Huic magno labori, quo contendit quis ut se inter praeteritum colloquet futurumque tempus cum grato sane animo tam de acceptis quam de donis postmodum accipiendis, clarum praestant Orientales Ecclesiae sensum continuationis, quae sibi Traditionis atque eschatologicae exspectationis nomina sumit.'

<sup>22</sup> *Oriente Lumen* 20: 'Certe, hodiernae menti videtur vera coniunctio fieri posse aliorum plene observata dignitate, dempta simul illa opinione universos mores et consuetudines Ecclesiae Latinae pleniores esse et aptiores ad rectam doctrinam demonstrandam;'

The Instruction *Il Padre* echoes *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*<sup>23</sup> in making ecumenism an important consideration in the development of the Eastern Rites.

In every effort of liturgical renewal, therefore, the practice of the Orthodox brethren should be taken into account, knowing it, respecting it and distancing from it as little as possible so as not to increase the existing separation...<sup>24</sup>

10. Again, there is an analogy here with the Extraordinary Form. Pope Benedict XVI speaks urgently of the importance of respecting the Church's 'ancient Latin liturgical tradition' to overcome, if possible, divisions in the Church.<sup>25</sup> These divisions relate not only to groups, but countless individual Catholics who found themselves alienated from the Church following the liturgical reform. As Pope Benedict XVI has written:

I have seen how arbitrary deformations of the liturgy caused deep pain to individuals totally rooted in the faith of the Church.<sup>26</sup>

11. The significance of the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite for ecumenism in relation to the Orthodox churches should also be mentioned. The late Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow remarked, referring to *Summorum Pontificum*, 'The recovery and valuing of the ancient liturgical tradition is a fact that we greet positively.'<sup>27</sup>

### Conclusion

12. Liturgical pluralism in itself is not, and never has been, a source of embarrassment for the Church, but is on the contrary a source of vitality. It demonstrates the response of faith to different conditions, and it represents a treasury of theological and spiritual insights which complement each other. The plurality of Rites and Usages has been affirmed and further developed by the Holy See right up to the present day.
13. As well as the Eastern Rites, the Church has always fostered Rites and Usages of venerable origin within the Latin Church, and made special efforts to preserve them, when they seemed likely to disappear, or to be unduly influenced by the Roman Rite. As well as the Usages of religious orders, already mentioned, the Mozarabic Rite is an example of a Rite whose historical and theological value is such that, however limited

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<sup>23</sup> *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* 24: Eastern Catholics are to promote unity with other Eastern Christians by, among other things, 'religious fidelity to the ancient Eastern traditions' ('religiosa erga antiquas traditiones orientales fidelitate').

<sup>24</sup> *Il Padre, incomprendibile* 21

<sup>25</sup> Letter to Bishops accompanying the Motu Proprio *Summorum Pontificum*: 'This glance at the past imposes an obligation on us today: to make every effort to enable for all those who truly desire unity to remain in that unity or to attain it anew.'

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> The Zenit news agency reported from Rome on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2007, as follows. 'Benedict XVI's move to allow for wider celebration of the Roman Missal of 1962 has received a positive reaction from the Orthodox Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow. "The recovery and valuing of the ancient liturgical tradition is a fact that we greet positively," Alexy II told the Italian daily *Il Giornale*. Benedict XVI's apostolic letter *Summorum Pontificum*, published in July, explains new norms allowing for the use of the 1962 missal as an extraordinary form of the liturgical celebration. "We hold very strongly to tradition," he continued. "Without the faithful guardianship of liturgical tradition, the Russian Orthodox Church would not have been able to resist the period of persecution." '

the use of its liturgical books may have become, the very fact that it continues to be celebrated in particular places is something to be treasured and preserved. However limited, or however wide, the usage of the Extraordinary Form may become in time, it too will have a value for the whole Church by representing, as a living tradition, a rich source of spiritual and theological insights, and a deep connection to the liturgical patrimony of the Latin Church.

14. The value of the Extraordinary Form is affirmed by Pope Benedict XVI. Like the Eastern Rites, it will maintain and develop this value, for the whole Church, only if it remains true to itself, its spirit and its traditions. This integrity is also necessary for its value in the cause of Church unity. There is a lesson to be learned from the fate of the Eastern Rites in former centuries, in which the Holy See approved changes which can now be seen as regrettable.<sup>28</sup>

15. The words of *Il Padre*, applied to the Eastern Churches, but equally applicable to the Extraordinary Form, are relevant:

For historical and cultural reasons, they have maintained a more direct continuity with the spiritual atmosphere of Christian origins, a prerogative that is ever more frequently considered even by the Occident not as a sign of stagnancy and backwardness but of precious fidelity to the sources of salvation.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> *Il Padre, incomprendibile* 24: ‘These interventions felt the effects of the mentality and convictions of the times, according to which a certain subordination of the non-Latin liturgies was perceived toward the Latin-rite liturgy which was considered “*ritus praestantior*.” This attitude may have led to interventions in the Eastern liturgical texts which today, in light of theological studies and progress, have need of revision, in the sense of a return to ancestral traditions.’ Cf. *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* 6: On the Liturgical rites proper to the Eastern Churches: ‘Besides, they should attain to an ever greater knowledge and a more exact use of them, and, if in their regard they have fallen short owing to contingencies of times and persons, they should take steps to return to their ancestral traditions.’ (‘Haec omnia, igitur, maxima fidelitate ab ipsis Orientalibus observanda sunt; qui quidem harum rerum cognitionem in dies maiorem usumque perfectiorem acquirere debent, et, si ab iis ob temporum vel personarum adiuncta indebite defecerint, ad avitas traditiones redire satagant.’) The Instruction *Varietates legitimae* makes a similar point about the history of the liturgy of the West (17): ‘During the course of the centuries, the Roman rite has known how to integrate texts, chants, gestures and rites from various sources and to adapt itself in local cultures in mission territories, even if at certain periods a desire for liturgical uniformity obscured this fact.’ The footnotes to this passage give examples of features of the Roman Rite adopted over time in response to local conditions, and magisterial responses to such developments.

<sup>29</sup> *Il Padre, incomprendibile* 9