

LITURGICAL PEACE

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Intro: Qui vivra, verra

I am grateful to be invited to speak publicly in my native land, this being my first opportunity as little of my adult life has been spent in England. I am all the more grateful in that the subject requested is that of the traditional Latin Mass, to wit, the Roman Rite ever old and ever new. The Novus Ordo, on the other hand, is an innovation which is, as yet, too amorphous to be regarded as a stable, consistent rite. It is still in a formative period, prior to becoming a rite. The Roman Rite took three centuries to become established. It may well be that the time has come for the Roman Catholic Church to have more than one rite in widespread use. In fact, she had two rites in her first millennium, the Roman and the Gallican, the former of which replaced the latter during the second millennium. Qui vivra, verra.

The Novus Ordo, being based on practices alien to the Roman Rite, cannot be said to be its revision. The Second Vatican Council only intended that the Roman Rite be revised and little if anything has so far been done. In any event, it will take generations to accomplish. So we are told by the late Cardinal Antonelli, whose views on the subject are, according to *Osservatore Romano*, authoritative. It is a case of qui vivra, verra. Whoever will live in times to come will see the fulfilment of what the Second Vatican Council intended. The forty bishops and two hundred experts of Paul VI's Consilium could not address themselves seriously to the task of revising the Roman Rite because the proceedings were dominated by a group obsessed with the idea that it would be better to replace it with a new rite. The result, according to Cardinal Ratzinger, was that "extremely grave damage" was inflicted on the liturgy.

Ensuring the survival of the Roman Rite in spite of the damage may well take generations. Again it is a case of qui vivra verra.. This is not to say that the Novus Ordo cannot continue to develop. Its future is assured because it has been accepted by the Pope and all the Bishops. Nonetheless, it is not yet an established rite and the process of becoming one will take generations. Here again, it is a case of qui vivra verra.

This then is the scenario or background against which our subject has to be discussed. The liturgical movement launched by Dom Gueranger in the 19th century has to be seen in our day as dividing into three: Ecclesia Dei, Sacrosanctum Concilium and Novus Ordo movements. The first is the traditional Mass movement founded in 1964 and which in part can now be renamed after its constitutive document Ecclesia Dei. The Sacrosanctum Concilium, is so-called because it is based on articles of the said document pertaining to the revision of the Roman Rite. And the Novus Ordo movement is in view of establishing a new rite. Liturgical peace can be assured as long as proponents in each movement do not disparage or dispute the right to exist of the other two movements. The outcome in each case should be left to Divine Providence.

It is absurd to say that the traditional Mass movement is "against Vatican II" because it is as firmly based on Sacrosanctum Concilium as the movement to revise the Roman Rite. For this Constitution on the Liturgy of Vatican II has two kinds of articles: those, which pertain to the continued existence of the Roman Rite and those, which pertain to its revision. The third or Novus Ordo movement also has some connection with Sacrosanctum Concilium in that its article 40 justifies experiments in view of radical innovation.

My principal focus is on the Ecclesia Dei movement, which began in 1964 as the traditional Mass movement. In the first of three parts, we examine its object, which is the defence of the Roman Rite. The second part is concerned with whether this object is best achieved peacefully or polemically. Our third part maintains that liturgy springs from custom not law. Those who emphasize legality unduly tend to lose sight of the reality of what liturgy is.

Finally, given that the Sacrifice of our Lord on the Cross, which He perpetuates through time and space by his Holy Mass, is the greatest act of devotion ever posed in the history of mankind, we will conclude with a reflection on this aspect.

I: DEFENCE OF ROMAN RITE

The movement to save the Roman Rite was not only born in England (in 1964) but also became a canonical entity in the Church. That was in 1971 when Cardinal Heenan obtained an indult on its behalf. The Holy See was thereby induced to permit, to a limited degree, the survival of the rite, which has identified the Roman Catholic Church since the 4th century. A group similar to that in England sprang up in France also in 1964 under the name of *Una Voce* which invoked the articles of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* which stipulated that Latin continue to be the language of the liturgy and that its sacred music continue to be its sublime lyrical expression in Gregorian chant and polyphony. The twin initiatives, English and French, spread to other countries and by 1968 the Congregations of the Holy See concerned with the liturgy were being visited regularly by delegations of *Una Voce International*. Its representations were based from the beginning on article 4 of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* which calls for equal respect and honour to be given to different rites. Hence the Roman Rite must not be consigned to oblivion, which would inevitably happen if only practices alien to it were given the right to exist. I understand for example that the latest edition of the Roman Missal of 1970 permits girls 44 to function as acolytes. This surely suffices to indicate that the said edition is not a Missal of the Roman Rite.

Canonical recognition of the existence of the traditional Mass movement in England and Wales can be said to have been gained not only thanks to the intervention of Heenan, Primate of England and Wales, but also to that of the English and Welsh martyrs who died to save the Roman Rite in the sixteenth century. Forty of them were canonized in 1970, the year in which the *Novus Ordo* became obligatory. This indication of divine intervention is an added reason to make me happy to be invited to speak on this subject in my native land.

However, the last time I came to England, three years ago, I found myself requested NOT to speak in public about the traditional Latin Mass. Not that it mattered then because the sole reason for my coming was to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of my priesthood in the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle in which I was baptized. This being the region blessed by the life and work of the Venerable Bede, truly great Latin Father of the Church, I simply wished to celebrate Mass, on this great occasion, in much the same manner as he did. I was graciously received by the Bishop, a Benedictine monk like Bede, at his residence in Newcastle-on-Tyne. He himself arranged for me to celebrate the traditional Latin Mass daily during my stay at a church in Gateshead across the river Tyne from Newcastle and to sing my Jubilee

Mass in the splendid church of St. Dominic in Newcastle itself. But, somewhat to my surprise, he asked me to refrain from speaking in public about the traditional Latin Mass. I gathered that he feared that this might be detrimental to liturgical peace. Nonetheless, he is well disposed towards those of us who wish to worship in the manner of our forefathers. And let me interpolate here that a most moving memory of my early boyhood was the fervour with which I heard the people sang, as their favourite hymn at the close of Mass in a Gateshead Church, "Faith of our Fathers living still."

In any event, at the time of my Jubilee, celebration, not disputation, being what I had in mind, I made no demur about the bishop's request. But on receiving a few months ago this invitation to speak on the forbidden subject under the auspices of this Pro Fide Forum, I accepted with alacrity. By all means I am glad to be able to urge on English soil that what is inimical to liturgical peace is the suppression, not the promotion, of the Mass to which our forefathers were faithful and which they handed down to us.

The remains of the monastery of the Venerable Bede stand to this day at the mouth of the River Wear while his body lies some distance up the valley or Weardale, as we call it, in Durham Cathedral which rises in its majestic Norman and Romanesque architecture on a great bluff around which the river bends.

I was born down the river from Durham at Chester-le-Street, which originated as the main Roman military base for the defence of the Roman Wall across the north of Britain. The Street, which terminated at this Roman castra was none other than the Great North Road, now better known as the A-1. The first Roman Emperor to be baptized, Constantine, may also have been born at Chester-le-Street because his father commanded the legions manning the Roman Wall over which the Picts and Scots were constantly inclined to swarm. So as Constantine's father must have had to spend much time in the main base camp of Chester-le-Street his famous son might have been born there if not at York, the closest Roman city behind the battle line.

Now it was the Peace of Constantine in A.D. 313, which led to the establishment of the Roman Rite whereon the liturgical peace of the Roman Catholic Church has depended ever since. But when the pseudo-spirit of Vatican II was strongly blowing, it was loudly claimed by its trumpeters that this Council was a revolutionary event whereby the Constantinian era was brought to an end. This puzzled me at the time but now I realize that what the revolutionaries really meant by this boast was the end

of the Roman Rite, insofar as it is the sole, tangible and remaining fruit of the Peace of Constantine. Indeed, a prominent Jesuit member of the Consilium, Jacques Gelineau, appointed by Paul VI to revise the Roman Rite actually declared triumphantly that it was dead. The chief Consilium expert in the matter was one Vaggagini, O.S.B., who persuaded his fellow members that the Roman Rite was irremediably deficient and therefore would have to be replaced, not revised. So the Pauline reform, instead of emulating the wise man in our Lord's parable able to bring forth from his treasures both old and new, itself, brought forth the *Novus Ordo* in a manner as to abolish the old. So just as the Roman Wall across the top of England needed to be vigorously defended against barbarian hordes in Constantine's time, so now the Roman Rite needs to be defended against destroyers of the ultimate rampart of Roman Catholicism which is the Roman Rite. Although prevented from enjoying complete success, they have succeeded in reducing the Rite (r-i-t-e), which has been the right (r-i-g-h-t) of Roman Catholics since the fourth century, to the level of a privilege dependent on the goodwill of each bishop individually. It also depends on his courage. For a bishop to show himself disposed to grant the indult to the faithful who petition him for it, he must brave the ire of the liturgical establishment set up by the Pauline reform in the 1960's and which still remains a major and ubiquitous force. It was particularly courageous for Cardinal Heenan to aid the lay branch of the traditional Mass movement and for Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre to launch its priestly branch. While the latter unfortunately became a casualty of the polemical war waged against the traditionalists, his initiative to save the Roman Rite by means of seminaries has been adopted by the Holy See, thanks to the magnanimity of John Paul II's *motu proprio Ecclesia Dei adflicta*.

The lay branch that set forth in England along the low road of humble petition and eventually grew into the international organization *Una Voce* has ever since been the main source of strength for the traditional Mass movement as a whole. For besides working peacefully and patiently to persuade bishops to grant the indult whereby the ancient Roman Rite may continue in existence, it is they who supply the priestly branch with vocations to the priesthood and finances for the seminaries. And this movement fulfills all criteria as one of the new ecclesial movements on which the future of the Church depends. Some bishops accede to its petitions fearlessly and others fearfully. Even if the bishop of my birthplace is amongst the latter, we are thankful to him that the Roman Rite is celebrated close to the remains of the Roman Wall built as the northernmost defence of the *Pax Romana*, the Roman Peace which

enabled the Gospel to travel far and wide along Roman roads. It was that Providence which prompted Saint Paul to say, *Civis romanus sum* -- I am a Roman citizen. Thanks to the Roman peace, the Roman Rite became the centre and summit of the Roman Catholic Church, whose mission is to bring to mankind a peace infinitely greater than that of the *Pax Romana*, a peace which this world cannot give.

But the Church can only fulfil her mission of peace to the world insofar as peace reigns in her liturgy. On the night of the Nativity, the forthcoming Christian liturgy was announced by the angelic choir in terms of: "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to men of goodwill." It is therefore utterly incongruous that the domain of the liturgy be other than a domain of peace par excellence.

II. POLEMON OR PEACE?

Polemon is Greek for "war" and from it is derived the English word "polemics." Should the restoration of the Roman Rite be sought peacefully or polemically? This question is pertinent. The rescue movement, which started out bravely in 1964 and grew to embrace several hundred thousand of the faithful in various countries came to a parting of the ways on July 2, 1988. This was the date of John Paul II's *motu proprio Ecclesia Dei* which urges bishops to allow traditionalists to enjoy "full ecclesial communion" and "respect for their legitimate aspirations." To this end, they are enjoined to be generous in granting the indult for the ancient Roman Rite to traditionalists who, for their part, should seek to persuade the bishops peacefully. Traditional Mass communities, which accept the *Ecclesia Dei* policy, follow the path of peace while those who reject it proceed *ipso facto* along the path of polemics. This is the case especially with the St. Pius X Society. However, several of its priests and seminarians immediately accepted *Ecclesia Dei* and were allowed to organize their own international seminary under the aegis of the Holy See. They thus founded a priestly branch of the *Ecclesia Dei* movement and rapidly became its flagship under the name of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter. They now number nearly a hundred priests and are overwhelmed with applications from young men to join them. In consequence, they are constructing two large seminaries, one in North America and the other in Europe, costing over ten million dollars each.

The St. Pius X Society for its part is building up to a million members and five hundred priests. Injustice to its leader, Archbishop Lefebvre, he cannot be faulted for having caused the war. It was caused by a Mgr Bugnini, later made Archbishop, whom Paul VI made the chief artisan of the postconciliar liturgical reform. Bugnini mobilized for the purpose, in addition to the Roman Consilium of forty bishops and two hundred experts, a vast array of national liturgical commissions. A special Congregation of Worship replaced the Consilium in 1969. This was liquidated in 1975, while Bugnini was exiled to Iran as papal representative. But the worldwide liturgical establishment still exists.

When Paul VI addressed the United Nations assembly at New York he cried out emotionally "War! Never again war!" Nonetheless he had let loose in the domain of the liturgy, where peace should reign undisturbed, reformers for whom progressive meant aggressive. Their penchant for polemics made them oblivious of history and thus prone to repeating its mistakes. The war of Chinese rites, which lasted for two and a half centuries, had only come to an end during the pontificate of Pius XII. Its casus belli coincided with the purpose of articles 37 to 40 of Sacrosanctum Concilium concerning the assimilation into Catholic liturgy of pagan customs, which, in the case of China, were reverential ceremonies in honour of Confucius and deceased relatives. Also the question of translating the Mass into Mandarin Chinese posed quite acutely the question of the adequacy of the Chinese vocabulary to express truths of the Catholic Faith. There was bitter controversy. The Holy See fluctuated in its decisions, first granting the legitimacy of the "Chinese rites" then severely forbidding them and finally, under Pius XII, legitimising them again.

The matter had to be argued out and great minds were engaged on both sides. But the arguing was so polemical that "war of rites" is its appellation in historical accounts such as that of the Catholic Encyclopaedia. In French, it is known as "la querelle des rites."

Chesterton relates in his autobiography how, when his brother Cecil was born, he thought "Good. Now I'll have someone to argue with." And in fact the Chesterton brothers argued vehemently all their lives. But says, Gilbert, "We never quarrelled. For a quarrel would have interrupted the argument."

One wonders how Paul VI, who as a close collaborator of Pius XII was familiar with the war of Chinese rites, could have failed to avoid a resumption of hostilities and their extension to the whole Church. The danger of this was quite evident because

from the 1940's on the liturgical movement had been divided by rivalry between traditionalists and progressives. Pius XII had to warn the latter, in his encyclical *Mediator Dei* of 1947, of certain aberrations such as antiquarianism, inordinate emphasis on the vernacular and an anti-devotional mentality, which have been bones of contention in the postconciliar period.

When an argument is engaged in peacefully it more easily descends to the depth where a common ground can be found, thanks to which it can be resolved. The common ground proper to traditionalists and progressists is living tradition. Liturgy, being a living thing, grows, organically and thus makes progress. In this perspective, traditionalism and progressism are complementary tendencies and can avoid being pushed by extremists on either side into opposition with each other.

The crash-programme mentality and impatience of Archbishop Bugnini made him ride rough-shod over all opposition and the consequent confusion and disorder finally obliged Paul VI to dismiss him summarily in 1975. But the damage done has resulted in deep division amongst bishops and even amongst prelates of the Holy See. In consequence, the Pauline reform, although no longer associated with the Bugnini revolution and able therefore to turn in the right direction, still has to be purified of the polemical streak which has vitiated it from the beginning and which is presently manifested by the phenomenon of belligerent bishops.

The success of the *Ecclesia Dei* movement depends on bishops growing in benevolence towards traditionalists and responding generously, whether fearlessly or otherwise, to the *motu proprio*, which is their constitutive document. For the rest, there are bishops unable to respond to the will of the Pope. This can happen, for instance, wherever the presbyteral council is in collusion with anti-traditionalist liturgists in the diocese. And there are bishops who are unwilling. Among the last named there are bishops who inhibit the policy of *Ecclesia Dei* and downplay its importance.

For some years, I found myself serving as a military chaplain and, during a stint of duty with an artillery regiment, I learned from the good-natured banter characteristic of army life, that people are divided into two categories: gunners and targets. I arrived at the beginning of December and, on evening of the fourth, Feast of St. Barbara, the Colonel of the Regiment made a little speech at the Officers Mess, saying, "With all due deference to Father Mole, it is a pity that the Pope has decreed the abolition the Feast of St. Barbara, patroness of the artillery, but fortunately, the head of my Church,

her Majesty the Queen, has rescinded the decree and so we can, without qualms, celebrate our patroness appropriately. " Thus I learned what it is to be a target. But after a while, they took me out to the artillery range and had me fire one of the guns of the battery. And then they declared me to be a gunner.

In army circles, the dichotomy of targets and gunners is only a pleasantry. But the traditional progressive dichotomy, which has afflicted the Church in the postconciliar period, has been decidedly unpleasant. When the Pauline reform was launched as a revolutionary movement, the traditionalist immediately found himself targeted as senile and nostalgic for the past. The first ordinance issued after the new Missal promulgated in 1969 was that bishops could permit aged and infirm priests to continue to celebrate the ancient Mass only if lay people were excluded. The said priests had to be quarantined lest members of the faithful be contaminated. This indignity was represented as an act of magnanimity.

The terms of the indult, which Paul VI granted to Cardinal Heenan, were drawn up by Mgr Bugnini who loaded it with humiliating and punitive restrictions and accompanied it with a letter stipulating that the concession should not be publicized. Cardinal Heenan was most displeased. At his death, pressure was brought on his successor, Cardinal Hume, to let the indult die with him. But Hume was too kind a man to afflict the traditionalists in such a callous manner.

John Paul II besides apologizing in his own name and that of the bishops for the abuses accompanying the Pauline reform, also asked the bishops to determine the extent to which attachment to the ancient Mass persisted. The enquiry apparently was addressed to the national episcopal commissions, which referred it to the national liturgical commissions. Predictably, given their inclination to consign traditionalists to oblivion, their reply was: no problem. They kept the enquiry secret from the faithful in complete disregard for the Council's decree *Inter mirifica* stipulating the people's right to information in matters concerning them. However, Dr. de Saventem, president of *Una Voce International*, upset the apple cart by engaging the same polling agency used by the German episcopate to put the question to the faithful. Five million Germans replied yes, they wanted the traditional Mass to remain available. And one million said that if the traditional Mass were available, they would attend it. A Catholic newspaper editor in England polled its readership and received ten thousand letters saying yes; give us back the ancient Mass. The editor lost his position for his temerity on the insistence of a belligerent bishop who was chairman of the episcopal commission for media and, incidentally, predecessor of the bishop

of my native diocese. The faithful had no right either to be informed or to have the Roman Rite. Thus the Holy See was apprised of the fact that the reply of the liturgical establishment to its enquiry could not be trusted. For this reason an indult was issued with the title *Quattuor abhinc annos* -- "Four years ago." It began by saying that it had been asked four years ago if there were faithful still desirous of worshipping according to the ancient Roman Rite and the reply sent back was that there was no such problem. However, says, the indult, *problema idem perduret* - the problem exists just the same. Hence this indult documents the untruthfulness of the liturgical establishment, to wit, that the traditional Mass movement, being insignificant, can be ignored. The worst kind of polemics is that of ostracism. Chesterton remarks about an English country squire who showed his butler around his estate, brandishing a carving knife, that he showed more humanity to the fellow than if he had ignored his existence.

In October of the year 1984 in which the indult was issued, a congress of national liturgical commissions was held at Rome, the organizers of which demanded that the indult be delayed until their meeting so that it could bring pressure on the Holy See not to rescind it. But this strategy was foiled by of a benevolent Roman prelate who got the indult published and promulgated before the delegates reached Rome.

Two years later, John Paul II, concerned about the extent to which the indult was blocked by its adversaries appointed a commission of nine cardinals to study what should be done to improve the lot of the traditionalists. This Commission recommended six rules. The first involved the principle, established by *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, that Latinity is essential to the Roman Rite. Therefore, in order to give due honour to the Roman Rite, at least one Sunday Mass should be celebrated in Latin in principal churches of each diocese. Secondly, private Masses celebrated by any priest could be celebrated in Latin with members of the faithful present. In regard to any Mass celebrated in Latin, the priest could choose either the Missal of Pius V or that of Paul VI. The remaining three rules stipulated that the rubrics and calendar proper to the Missal chosen must be observed.

In addition, according to Cardinal Stickler who was a member of the Commission, it was asked two questions. The first was whether Paul VI intended to abolish the ancient Mass. The answer, eight to one, was No. The second question was: "Can a bishop forbid a priest to celebrate the Tridentine Mass?" to which the unanimous reply of all nine Cardinals was No.

But an organized effort of belligerent bishops in the European episcopate succeeded in exerting great pressure on the Pope not to enact the recommendations of his commission of cardinals. But had he not been deterred from posing this act of magnanimity, it is highly probable that later would have been avoided. This is the schism which occurred two years another clear indication that the responsibility for this schism lies on both sides of the traditional/progressive dichotomy and therefore there is a grave moral responsibility incumbent on all bishops to to leave no stone unturned to heal it.

The next notable attempt to reinforce the traditionalist position was a brief submitted to John Paul II by Dr. Eric de Saventem, president of Una Voce International in the autumn of 1993. It was a learned exposition of arguments pleading that the *motu proprio Ecclesia Dei* be made more juridically effective. He was encouraged to take this step by Mgr Re, chief of the papal secretariate, who undertook personally to present the matter to His Holiness.

But all that Dr. de Saventem eventually received for his pains was a brief and peremptory letter, signed by Mgr Re, and dated Jan. 17, 1994, to the effect that the Roman Rite revised was the law and the Roman Rite unrevised was merely a privilege. There was no consideration of the arguments. They were simply brushed aside.

The policy of pushing the Pauline reform forward in a unrelenting manner during the pontificate of Paul VI resulted in a counter polemical reaction coupled with a deep mistrust of the Holy See which reached a climax in the schismatic act posed by Archbishop Lefebvre in 1988. Its mistrust proved that proved insuperable to all overtures of John Paul H made through the intermediary of Cardinals Gagnon and Ratzinger both of whom proceeded with exquisite tact. But the kindness of John Paul II was not overcome. He acted swiftly and energetically to respond with his magnificent gesture of the *motu proprio Ecclesia Dei adflicta*.

The current effort of certain belligerent bishops is to undermine the effectiveness of *Ecclesia Dei* by arguing that it is only a temporary document for which time has run out. Their attitude is not without some support within the Roman Curia because the second president of the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei* took pleasure in informing bishops on *ad limina* visits to Rome that his mandate was to terminate the Commission. Moreover, Mgr Re, in his letter of rejection of Dr. de Saventem's brief referred to John Paul H's *motu proprio* as being of a temporary nature and that the

privilege of the ancient Roman Rite was not to be regarded as perennial. And he showed himself quite aware of the provocatively polemical effect that he expected the letter to have by telling Dr. de Saventhem, as he handed him the letter, "This is going to anger you."

The last severe polemical flare-up occurred when the present and third president of the Pontifical Commission Ecclesia, Cardinal Felici, addressed a letter of reprimand, on July 13, 1999, to Fr. Bisig, Superior General of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter. This was sent in prompt response to a complaint received from a group of sixteen dissident members of the Fraternity in France, who sought the replacement of Fr. Bisig with an apostolic administrator. Fr. Bisig had incurred their displeasure by not permitting the occasional celebration of the Novus Ordo. Cardinal Felici refers in his letter to certain bishops who were displeased by the Fraternity. One of them, a French prelate, openly expressed his satisfaction with the dissidents' manoeuvre by comparing it to that of the Trojan Horse. In any event, the game of gunners versus targets finished with the cardinal hors de combat. He fell from a platform and broke his hip so badly that it took five and a half hours of surgery to mend. A meeting he had convoked of all the members of the Fraternity took place in the vicinity of Rome with a trio of Roman secretaries to preside and politely answer questions. The dissident French members laid down their arms. All the rest of the members showed themselves solidly in support of their Superior General. The outcome was that he was told what he could have been told in the first place: let the matter be taken up at the next General Chapter of the Fraternity (already scheduled to take place in 2000).

While all is well that ends well, traditionalists were warned that the belligerence of which they are the target can strike at them from a most unexpected quarter. And indeed, the moral of the pattern of polemics evident from the very beginning of the Pauline reform is that, no matter what the provocation, traditionalists must not abandon the peaceful policy enjoined on them by Ecclesia Dei.

Once, I was requested to visit an Ecclesia Dei community in western Canada and celebrate Mass for them for three Sundays. After Mass on the third Sunday, I was told that a delegation from the local St. Pius X community was waiting to see me. The case they put to me was that they owned their own church and school and had a priest in residence. Why then should they endure the frustrations and humiliations of being an Ecclesia Dei community? This, incidentally, was the first time I heard the expression "Ecclesia Dei community" and I have used it ever since. I replied cordially, "Certainly, I will be glad to tell you why. Sooner or later, there will be

bishops who feel they have to make overtures to you to end the division. They will feel obliged to do so once they realize that there has been fault on both sides. But they will have no chance of success unless there are Ecclesia Dei communities to keep the door open for your return. It is for your sake that they endure frustrations and humiliations.

III. REALITY OR LEGALITY?

Liturgy does not spring from law but from custom. To impose legality for the sake of uniformity is to force the liturgy on to a Procrustean bed. Custom reflects the reality that one kind of people differs from another in taste and temperament.

The English saying "One ought not to argue about taste" comes from the mediaeval axiom: *de gustibus non disputandum*. Once a Scotchman invited a Frenchman to dinner and, being a man of frugal tastes, the only dish on the table was a bowl of porridge. The Frenchman was rather of epicurean taste, accustomed to the choicest of dishes, and had never seen porridge in his life. So he asked: "Does one eat this, or has it already been eaten?" Well, to go from the ridiculous to the sublime, liturgy is custom elevated to the level of divine worship where the axiom *de gustibus non disputandum* becomes absolutely imperative.

The custom of early Christians at Rome was to worship in Greek. When the Latin rite arrived centuries later as an alternative custom, there was no question of enforcing the transition from Greek to Latin by law. The time simply came for Greek to say, as far as Rome and the West were concerned: *nunc dimittis servum tuum in pace* -- "now is the time for thy servant to depart in peace." Thus Latin supplanted Greek at Rome peacefully. But if the Latin then, like the vernacular today, had been crash-programmed into existence with the force of law, then contentiousness to the point of schism would have marred its inception.

Those, whose primary concern is to impose legality, in order to obtain uniformity, tend to lose all contact with reality. Permit me to cite some examples of this. They also illustrate how the phenomenon of the belligerent bishop presented itself and why John Paul H's *motu proprio Ecclesia* appeals to bishops to be benevolent instead towards traditionalists.

My first example is that of a Canadian bishop who wanted all the people in his diocese to stand for communion but found himself stubbornly opposed by five women members of the same family, who insisted on kneeling. So he passed a law which obliged everyone in his diocese to stand for communion. Then the next time the recalcitrant family knelt to receive, the police were called in. The five were arrested and charged with disturbing the peace, this being a criminal offence. The bishop himself appeared in court to testify against the five culprits. They were sentenced to six months' probation. But they were not defenceless women. One of them was a highly competent lawyer who appealed the sentence and, although she lost in two courts of appeal, went all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. There she won a unanimous ruling in favour of the family and the bishop, badly burned by his belligerence, was obliged to repeal his law.

Another more recent but less tragic case is that of the Bishop of Birmingham, Alabama, in the United States, who considers that every Mass in his diocese should be celebrated with the priest versus populum or facing the people. He acknowledges that the custom of priest and people facing ad orientem is not immemorial but claims that it has been supplanted to an overwhelming extent in the United States for the last thirty years. What concerned him particularly was a Mass televised daily, mostly in Latin, by the famous Mother Angelica over her vast network, which reaches tens of millions of people. It was the Mass of her own monastery. So the bishop made a law, armed with severe sanctions that henceforth every Mass, including Mother Angelica's monastery Mass, be henceforth versus populum. Mother Angelica, being a peaceful woman, promptly complied. But as the legitimacy of his decree, not surprisingly, was called into question by reputable canonists, the bishop submitted the matter to Rome. The answer he received was that both customs are to be respected wherever found and that theological or disciplinary stigma should be attached to neither. So the bishop got his own way but at least had to abandon his belligerence.

A third instance involved no less a personage than the Cardinal Archbishop of Montreal who had to deal with a parish priest who continued to celebrate the ancient Roman Rite. He was summoned to the police station to be interrogated but on returning to his presbytery, found he was locked out. The doors had been padlocked. But instead of skulking like Achilles in his tent, he used his freedom to become the flying founder of the traditional Mass movement across Canada. He flew indefatigably, every weekend for many a year, landing here and there across the continent to say Mass for groups of traditionalists who, like himself, found

themselves virtually locked out for persisting in worshipping in the manner of their forefathers. Finally, the combative Cardinal Archbishop found himself in circumstances, which obliged him to resign. He was succeeded by a benevolent prelate who lost no time in seeking reconciliation with his flying priest and invited him to settle down again with a handsome church in which to celebrate every day and twice on Sundays. He is still going strong and has a younger priest to assist him. The traditional Mass communities he visited across Canada have all entered into good relations with their respective bishops. Vocations to the priesthood have sprung up amongst them and, as soon as they have been trained by the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter, they will become priests for the said communities. I myself have been asked to visit and encourage them. This is a story which illustrates the saying that 'It is an ill wind indeed which blows no one any good.' And the moral of all three stories I think is that as long as traditionalists persevere in peacefully petitioning their bishops, benevolence will grow and belligerence will decline.

The reality of liturgy is that it is human and alive. As such, it has a soul, which needs a body. The soul of Christian liturgy is the Incarnate Word of God in the act of worshipping his Father. He worships both in His personal body and in His mystical body the Church. He offers to His Father His flesh and blood under the appearance of bread and wine while uttering His prayer of thanksgiving. A soul abhors being disembodied. Early in the fourth century, the Peace of the Emperor Constantine made possible the stabilizing of the Christian liturgy in different cultural regions of the world. Its inculturation in the west resulted in the soul of the Mass instituted at the Last Supper becoming embodied in customary habits peculiar to the way that western people raise up their minds and hearts to God. Thus the Roman Rite was born within the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church. Let it be noted here that we traditionalists do not worship according to the Roman Rite of yesterday or, as it is usually said, according to an antecedent form thereof for there is only one shape or form of the Roman Rite, namely that which, like its soul, is "yesterday, today and the same forever." For the sake of peace, we allow ourselves to be described as being attached to the? Roman Rite of yesteryear granted to us as a privilege. But it is only for the time being that we accept this legal fiction while patiently waiting for reality to reassert itself.

And we note, gratefully, that the anomaly of reducing the immemorial Roman Mass to the level of a privilege is corrected at least in principle in *Ecclesia Dei*. For it reaches towards reality by incorporating the indult *Quattuor annos* into its own

context wherein traditionalists are acknowledged as deserving "full ecclesial communion" and "respect for their aspirations." But in practice, John Paul II evidently wishes the rightful aspirations of traditionalists to be realized, not by obliging the bishops in law but by peaceful persuasion. For him, it is a situation therefore which needs time, perhaps even a generation, to resolve.

When the Pope has been petitioned in a notable manner to give some juridical force to his *motu proprio*, as he has on two occasions, one with 40,000 names collected in the United States and the other with 70,000 names collected in France, the only response he has made is that it is the bishops who must be petitioned. So time has to elapse before the desired goal can be reached.

The same is true for those who desire liturgical changes. Those indicated as desirable by the Second Vatican Council may well take generations to become assimilated into the living reality, which the Roman Rite is. The slow process of organic growth must be allowed to take its time. As for the practices associated with the *Novus Ordo*, as they have been introduced as experiments, they must go through a protracted period of trial and error and, if this or that practice proves in the long run to be a hindrance in establishing a new rite, it will have to be discarded. Time is of the essence in the domain of the liturgy on this earth, which is an anticipation of the eternal liturgy in heaven. One cannot think in terms of instant liturgy, like instant porridge.

What is enjoined on the *Ecclesia Dei* movement by John Paul II's *motu proprio* in its article 5 is that its primary purpose be the pursuit of the reality of truth. A serious endeavour by way of a doctrinal agenda has already existed in the movement for the past five or six years. Thanks to the organization with the heavenly acronym CIEL which stands for "Centre international des etudes liturgiques." This is a forum, which young French traditionalists have organized whereby scholars in theology and other disciplines can come together for a three-day colloquium every year. CIEL has branches in other countries. CIEL UK is to meet here in London next week, on May 13th.

The volumes of the discourses at CIEL gatherings in France are published in five languages and sent to the bishops of those languages. Thus they are given the opportunity of finding out that the *Ecclesia Dei* movement for the restoration of the Roman Rite is based on the search for truth about the liturgy.

Apart from that, scholars are beginning to appear in other circumstances who contribute to the intellectual defence of the Roman Rite. About this time last year, I had the privilege of taking part in a one-day colloquium on *Ecclesia Dei adflicta* at New York at which Dr. Catherine Pickstock of the University of Cambridge also gave a discourse. She was very much on the summit of the subject while I, as usual, was on the lower slopes. This Catherine is very much in the lineage of other Catherines of history who, because they are, possessed of wisdom as well as youth and comeliness; simply have to be listened to. Catherine of Cambridge, as I think she should be called, wrote her doctoral thesis at the age of twenty-four in which she thoroughly demolished the claim of the liturgical reformers that the Roman Rite degenerated during the Middle Ages to the point that it cannot now be revised. It must be replaced. She demonstrated brilliantly that, on the contrary, the mediaeval Roman Rite reached the apotheosis of what liturgy can be on this earth at least. This was possible in mediaeval society, given that liturgy was then identified, not just with the prayerful customs of the people but with their whole of life. Liturgical reform therefore, she said, should be a process of rebuilding this identity between liturgy and life as a whole. Catherine Pickstock, incidentally, is an Anglican.

As for those who claim that the *motu proprio Ecclesia Dei* to be only of a provisory and temporary nature, it can be pointed out that the priority it gives to the pursuit of truth makes of it a document of permanent importance. So does its goal of maintaining peace in the domain of liturgy without which the Church is gravely inhibited in trying to bring peace to the world.

Concl: Devotion

In conclusion, let us refer to the overall perspective in which the role of the *Ecclesia Dei* movement should be envisaged. For the traditional Mass movement is part of a larger spectrum, which includes the pro-life, pro-family and home schooling movements. These militate on behalf of motherhood without which there can be no priesthood. The Son of God could not have become our Priest and Victim had not Mary, the Virgin of Nazareth, consented to give Him the flesh and blood of His priestly sacrifice. The role of motherhood indeed is to nurture innocent life in the sanctuary of the womb and the sanctuary of the home until it blossoms into priesthood, if not into a related vocation, lay or religious.

What is terribly ominous about our times is that the role of motherhood being attacked and destroyed on a colossal scale. This is the ultimate reason why the priesthood and the Mass are disappearing from vast regions where hitherto they have flourished. Our Lady, in her message of Fatima, has promised that this crisis will be overcome if we have devotion towards her immaculate Heart. This is in order that she may inculcate in us the devotion of her Immaculate Heart, which she manifested at the foot of the Cross to her divine Son shedding His precious blood for the salvation of mankind is Devotion, subjectively speaking, is the principal act of the virtue of religion while objectively, the principal act of the Catholic religion is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The greatest act of devotion in the history of mankind is that which our Lord posed by offering Himself on the cross for our sake. We could not all be there on Calvary to respond to His devotion, as did His Mother, the other holy women, and St. John. But the night before He died, he instituted His Sacrifice in a manner which permits all the members of His mystical body, the Church, to be present and offer Him their devotion in union with His. In the western or Roman Catholic Church, it is the Roman Rite which, par excellence enables us to be present at the Holy Sacrifice of the Cross.

The traditional Mass Movement, in addition to a doctrinal agenda, which is what I have been outlining in this talk, should have a devotional agenda. To this end, it should systematically cultivate within its ranks the devotion of the Immaculate Heart of Mary whereby devotion to the Precious Blood is instilled in our hearts. Devotion to the Precious Blood is one and the same thing as devotion to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Our Lady of Fatima moreover promises that there will be a time of peace. The Ecclesia Dei movement should, under the-aegis of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, encourage the practice of devotion to the Precious Blood and thereby seek to restore peace in the domain of the liturgy, source and summit of the activity of the Church.