

Nova et Vetera

From 30Days

Benedict XVI has signed and published the document that liberalizes the use of the Roman Missal edited by Pope John XXIII in 1962. An interview with Cardinal Darío Castrillón Hoyos, president of the Pontifical Commission «Ecclesia Dei»: «The first wrong evaluation is to say that it is a return to the past. That isn't so»



Interview with Cardinal Darío Castrillón Hoyos by Gianni Cardinale

The motu proprio *Summorum pontificum* by Benedict XVI that in practice liberalizes the use of the Roman Missal of 1962 was finally published on 7 July. The motu proprio, that will come into force on 14 September, establishes that the Roman Missal promulgated by Paul VI in 1970 is the ordinary expression of the *lex orandi* of the Catholic Church of Latin rite. The Missal promulgated by Saint Pius V and re-edited by Blessed John XXIII must, therefore, be considered as extraordinary form. In no way, therefore, is a division in the «law of the faith» created since it is a matter of

«two uses of the single Roman rite». It is hence lawful to celebrate mass according to the typical edition of the Roman Missal of 1962. To this purpose, the motu proprio of Benedict XVI indicates new rules that replace those established by the previous documents, Quattuor abhinc annos of 1984 and Ecclesia Dei of 1988, in which the indulgence was granted whereby the so-called Tridentine mass could be celebrated, but only with the consent of the local bishop. From 14 September onwards instead no priest or rector can impede the celebration of the mass of Saint Pius V in his church, on condition that the faithful who ask for it also have a priest willing to do so, provided he be suitable and not legally impeded. Not only that. The motu proprio also lays down that the parish priest may grant the license to use the older ceremony in the administration of the Sacraments: of Baptism, Confession, Matrimony and the Anointing of the Sick. Ordinaries (bishops and religious superiors) are also granted the faculty of celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The document is accompanied by a Letter, addressed to the bishops of the world, in which among other things Benedict XVI makes clear that «there is no contradiction between the one and the other edition of the Missale Romanum». And gives the reminder that in the «history of the liturgy there is growth and progress, but no break», stressing that what was sacred for previous generations «cannot suddenly be altogether forbidden or even harmful».

30Days asks the Colombian Cardinal Darío Castrillón Hoyos, president since 2000 of the Pontifical Commission «Ecclesia Dei» (as well as Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy from 1996 to 2006), to illustrate the more important points in the motu proprio Summorum pontificum.

30Days: Your Eminence, what is the significance of this motu proprio that liberalizes the use of the so-called Missal of Saint Pius V?

DARÍO CASTRILLÓN HOYOS: When, after Vatican Council II, there were changes in the liturgy, substantial groups of laity and also of churchmen felt uneasy because they were strongly attached to the liturgy in force for centuries. I am thinking of the priests who for fifty years had celebrated the so-called mass of Saint Pius V and who suddenly found themselves having to celebrate another, I am thinking of the faithful for generations accustomed to the old rite, I am also thinking of children like the altar boys who suddenly found themselves lost in serving mass with the Novus ordo. So there was uneasiness at various levels. For some it was also of a theological nature, people who retained that the old rite expressed the sense of the sacrifice better

than the one brought in. Others, not least for cultural reasons, were nostalgic for the Gregorian and the great polyphonies that were a treasure of the Latin Church. To aggravate everything there was the fact that those who felt the uneasiness blamed the changes on the Council, when in reality the Council itself had neither asked nor foreseen the details of the changes. The Mass that the Council Fathers celebrated was the Mass of Saint Pius V. The Council had not asked for the creation of a new rite, but a greater use of the vernacular and greater participation by the congregation.

30 Days: Agreed, that was the air one breathed forty years ago. But today the generation that showed that unease no longer exists. Not just that: clergy and people have grown accustomed to the *Novus ordo*, and in the great majority of the cases are very comfortable...

CASTRILLÓN HOYOS: Exactly, in the great majority, even if many amongst them don't know what went missing with the abandonment of the old rite. But not everybody has grown used to the new rite. Curiously even in the new generations, both of clerics and laity, interest and respect for the earlier rite seems to be blooming. And they are priests and ordinary faithful who sometimes have nothing to do with the so-called *Lefebvrians*. These are facts about the Church, to which pastors cannot remain deaf. That is why Benedict XVI, who is a great theologian with a deep liturgical sensibility, has decided to promulgate the *motu proprio*.

30Days: But wasn't there an indulgence already?

CASTRILLÓN HOYOS: Yes, there was an indulgence already, but already John Paul II had understood that the indulgence had not been sufficient. Not least because some priests and bishops were reluctant to apply it. But above all because the faithful who wanted to celebrate with the old rite must not be considered second-class. They are faithful whose right must be recognized to attend a mass that has nourished the Christian people for centuries, that nourished the sensibility of saints like Filippo Neri, Don Bosco, Saint Teresa of Lisieux, Blessed John XXIII and the servant of God John Paul II himself who, as said, understood the problem of the indulgence and hence already had in mind to extend the use of the 1962 Missal. I must say that in the meetings with cardinals and with the heads of ministries, in which this provision was discussed, resistance was really minimal. Pope Benedict XVI, who followed the process from the beginning, has taken this important step already conceived by his great predecessor. It is a Petrine provision emanated out of love for a great liturgical treasure, which is the mass of Saint Pius V, and also out of a pastor's love for a considerable group of faithful.

30Days: But there has been resistance also from spokesmen of the episcopate...

CASTRILLÓN HOYOS: Resistance that according to me derives from two mistakes. The first wrong evaluation is to say that it is a return to the past. That is not so. Also because nothing is taken away from the Novus ordo, which remains the ordinary way of celebrating the single Roman rite; while those who want it are granted the freedom to celebrate the mass of Saint Pius V as extraordinary form.

30Days: That is the first mistake of those who oppose the motu proprio, and the second?

CASTRILLÓN HOYOS: That it's a matter of decreasing episcopal power. But that is not so. The Pope has not changed the Code of Canon Law. The bishop is the moderator of the liturgy in his own diocese. But the Apostolic See is entitled to shape the sacred liturgy of the universal Church. And a bishop must act in harmony with the Apostolic See and must guarantee the rights of every believer, including that of being able to attend the mass of Saint Pius V, as extraordinary form of the rite.

30 Days: Yet it has been claimed that with this motu proprio Ratzinger «is mocking the Council» and «giving a slap in the face» to his predecessors Paul VI and John Paul II...

CASTRILLÓN HOYOS: Benedict XVI is following the Council, that did not abolish the mass of Saint Pius V nor asked for it to be done. And he is following the Council that urged that the voice and the legitimate desires of the laity be listened to. Those who claim these things should see the thousands of letters that have come to Rome asking for the freedom of being able to attend the mass to which they feel so attached. And he is not going against his predecessors who are widely quoted both in the motu proprio and in the letter written by the Pope that accompanies its publication. Pope Montini immediately granted the possibility of celebrating the mass of Saint Pius V in some cases. John Paul II, as I have already said, meant to prepare a motu proprio similar to that now published.

30Days: Isn't there also some apprehension that a small minority of believers may impose the mass of Saint Pius V on the parish?

CASTRILLÓN HOYOS: Those who say that obviously haven't read the motu proprio. It's clear that no parish priest will be obliged to celebrate the mass of Saint Pius V. Only that if a group of the faithful, having a priest disposed to say it, asks to

celebrate this mass, the parish priest or the rector of the church can't oppose it. Obviously, if there are difficulties, it will be up to the bishop to act in such a way that everything takes place with respect and I would say commonsense in harmony with the universal Pastor.

30Days: But is there not the danger that with the introduction of two forms, the ordinary and the extraordinary, within the Latin rite there may be liturgical confusion in parishes and in dioceses?

CASTRILLÓN HOYOS: If things are done in line with simple commonsense there's no danger. And for that matter there are already dioceses in which masses are celebrated in several rites, since there are communities of Latin, Ukrainian Greek-Catholic or Ruthenian, Maronite, Melchite, Syro-Catholic, Chaldean faithful, etc... I'm thinking for example of some dioceses in the United States, like Pittsburgh, which take this legitimate liturgical variety as a treasure, not as a tragedy. Then there are also individual parishes that host rites different from the Latin, also of Orthodox or Prechalcedonian communities, without it causing scandal. So I don't see any danger of confusion. On condition, I repeat, that everything takes place with order and mutual respect.

30Days: There are also those who believe that this motu proprio inflicts harm on the single rite that the Council Fathers wanted...

CASTRILLÓN HOYOS: If it is clear that the Roman rite remains single, albeit it can be celebrated in two forms, let me remind you that in the Latin Church there has never been one single rite for everybody. Today for example there are all the rites of the Eastern Churches in communion with Rome. And also in the Latin rite there are other rites apart from Roman one, such as the Ambrosian or the Mozarabic. The mass of Saint Pius V itself, when it was approved, did not annul all the earlier rites, but only those that could not boast at least two centuries of existence...

30Days: And the mass of Saint Pius V was never abolished by the Novus ordo?

CASTRILLÓN HOYOS: Vatican Council II did not do so, and afterwards there has never been any positive action that established so. Thus formally the mass of Saint Pius V has never been abolished. It is odd however that those who vaunt themselves as authentic interpreters of Vatican II give an interpretation of it, in the liturgical sphere, so restrictive and so little respectful of the freedom of faithful, making that Council seem even more coercive than the Council of Trent.

30Days: The motu proprio doesn't establish a minimum number of faithful necessary for requesting permission to celebrate the mass of Saint Pius V. Yet in the past it was rumoured that a minimum of thirty believers was being considered...

CASTRILLÓN HOYOS: This is the glaring demonstration of how much disinformation has been set about on this motu proprio by people who have not read the drafts or who, in interested fashion, wanted to influence its drafting. I followed the whole process that led to the final draft and as I remember no minimum limit of faithful, neither thirty, nor twenty, nor a hundred ever appeared in any draft.

30Days: Why was it decided to give a preview of the text of the motu proprio, on 27 June, to some churchmen?

CASTRILLÓN HOYOS: The Pope could not summon all the bishops of the world, and so he convoked some prelates, particularly interested in the question for a variety of reasons, representatives from all the continents. He presented the text to them allowing the possibility of making observations. All those partaking had the chance to speak.

30Days: Were there changes to the text of the motu proprio as it had been prepared in the light of that meeting?

CASTRILLÓN HOYOS: Small changes in wording were asked for and so introduced, no more.

30Days: What prospects may this motu proprio open with the Lefebvrians?

CASTRILLÓN HOYOS: The followers of Monsignor Lefebvre have always asked for the possibility for any priest to celebrate the mass of Saint Pius V. Now that faculty is officially and formally recognized. On the other hand the Pope repeats that the mass that we all officiate each day, that of the Novus ordo, remains the ordinary mode of celebrating the single Roman rite. And hence neither the value, nor even less the validity of the Novus ordo can be denied. That must be clear.

30Days: Will the motu proprio increase the responsibility of the «Ecclesia Dei»?

CASTRILLÓN HOYOS: This Commission was founded to gather in the laity and the churchmen who abandoned the Lefebvrian movement after the unlawful episcopal consecrations. And in fact it has then also striven for dialogue with the Fraternity of Saint Pius X itself in the prospect of full communion. Today the motu proprio is addressed to all those believers attached to the mass of Saint Pius V, and

not only to those of let us say Lefebvrian origin. And this obviously presupposes very much more work for us.