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THE MISSA LECTA

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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 traditions’, 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.

The *Missa Lecta*: Abstract

The *Missa recitata* or Dialogue Mass, in which the Faithful are encouraged to make the servers’ responses and sometimes to say aloud other texts, was introduced in the early 20th century, and continues to be practised in some parts of the world. There is evidence of the Faithful joining in the responses in Southern Europe in the 16th century, but not elsewhere or later. The rationale of the 20th century practice is to encourage a deeper participation in the Mass; the purpose of this paper is to explore the rationale of hearing Low Mass without dialoguing, against the presumption that dialoguing is necessarily better. The value of silent participation of the Faithful is in fact defended by Pope Pius XII and Blessed Pope John Paul II, and should be seen as a form of contemplative prayer, which the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* links to the liturgy and calls the ‘most intense time of prayer.’

FIUV Position Paper 18: the *Missa Lecta*

1. At Low Mass in the Extraordinary Form, the responses may be made by the server alone (*Missa lecta*, the ‘silent’ Low Mass), or by congregation (*Missa recitata*,¹ the ‘Dialogue Mass’). The making of the responses (and often reciting other texts)² by the congregation was encouraged by the 20th century Liturgical Movement,³ in the context of a degree of liturgical experimentation and confusion.⁴ In 1921 and 1922 the Sacred Congregation for Rites stated that this practice was not ‘expedient’;⁵ in 1935, in response to a *dubium*, it said that it is for the Ordinary to decide whether it would be advantageous to encourage it in particular cases.⁶ It was discussed in Pope Pius XII’s

¹ It is called ‘*Missa recitata*’ in *De musica sacra* (see Appendix B); an early proponent, Mgr C. Callewaert, called it ‘*Missa Dialogata*’ in a 1932 article (see Ellard *op. cit.* p43).

² In addition to the servers’ responses, proponents of the *Missa recitata* suggested that the Faithful also say the parts sung by the Schola in Sung Mass, such as the Gloria and Creed, and perhaps also the Introit and other sung Propers, which are not said by the servers. The Schola, however, does not sing all the servers’ responses, notably at the Preparatory Prayers, since these are occluded by the singing of the Introit and Kyrie (see Positio 9: ‘Silence and Inaudibility in the Extraordinary Form’): what is being proposed is a hybrid role for the Faithful. The different historical origins of the chants should be noted: Jungmann suggests that with responsorial chants such as the Kyrie and the Gradual, the Faithful originally sang the responses, the Gloria and Creed were first sung by ‘the clergy assembled around the altar’, and taken over from them by the Schola (Josef Jungmann *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its origins and development* (English Edition, New York: Benzinger, 1950) Vol. I p238.) Most surprising is to find the *Pater Noster* also considered suitable for the Faithful to say with the priest, since it has never been said or sung by either servers or Schola. Its status as a priestly prayer is indicated by the celebrant’s gesture at this point: the prayer is introduced with hands joined, and said with hands extended.

³ It seems the practice originated in Belgium, and was proposed at the Liturgical Congress in Malines in 1909, by Fr Pierard. See Fr Gerald Ellard SJ *The Dialog Mass* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1942), p41

⁴ Ellard notes the growth in Italy of ‘the loud recitation in Italian *of the entire Mass, the Canon and the words of Consecration not excepted*’ (emphasis in the original), which was condemned by the Sacred Congregation of Rites in 1921 and 1922, and the saying in the vernacular of those ‘parts such as are not recited *aloud* by the priest, such as the Offertory prayers and the Prayers before Communion’ which spread in the diocese of Chicago in the United States of America in the 1930s (*ibid.* p48; pp169-70; p176). Ellard describes six methods of dialoguing, with children in mind (*ibid.* pp173-189); *De musica sacra* describes four options (see Appendix B).

⁵ The Sacred Congregation for Rites made several responses to questions on the Dialogue Mass in 1921 and 1922. The 1922 ruling (4 August) stated: ‘Things that are in themselves licit, are not always expedient, owing to the difficulties which may easily arise, as in this case, especially on account of the disturbances which the priests who celebrate and the people who assist may experience, to the disadvantage of the sacred Action and of the rubrics. Hence, it is expedient to retain the common usage, as we have several times replied in similar cases.’ (Ellard, *op. cit.* pp50-1) Jungmann notes that the argument had been made in 1921 that for the Faithful to make the responses was contrary to Canon 818 of the 1917 Code of Canon Law, which states ‘Reprobating every contrary custom, celebrating priests are to observe accurately and devoutly the rubrics of their own liturgical books, taking care lest they add other ceremonies or prayers on their own authority.’ (Jungmann *op. cit.* Vol. I pp237-8, note 25)

⁶ Sacred Congregation for Rites, Decree of 30 Nov, 1935, to the Cardinal Archbishop of Genoa: ‘This Sacred Congregation, having heard also the opinion of the Liturgical Commission, replies that, in accordance with decree n. 4375 [1921], it is for the Ordinary to decide whether, in individual cases, in view of all the circumstances, namely, the place, the people, the number of Masses which are being said at the same time, the proposed practice, though in itself praiseworthy, in fact causes disturbance rather than furthers devotion. This can easily happen in the case of the practice mentioned in the second question [sc. the saying by the people of the Kyrie, Gloria, Creed, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei], even without passing on the reason assigned, namely, that a private Mass is an abbreviated sung Mass. According to the above standard, Your Eminence has the full right to control this form of liturgical piety according to your prudent discretion.’ (See Ellard *op. cit.* p62)

1947 Encyclical *Mediator Dei*,⁷ and the Sacred Congregation of Rites amplified the forms of dialogue possible in the 1955 Instruction *De musica sacra*.⁸

2. Both practices are lawful, and both have sustained the spiritual lives of Catholics attached to the Extraordinary Form for at least two generations. When liturgical practices are deeply embedded in popular experience and piety the strongest justification is needed to attempt to impose changes. This paper proposes that there is no such justification. *De musica sacra* proposed that engaging in the dialogue represents the ‘most perfect form’ of participation,⁹ and in general it would seem that the onus is on the defender of the non-dialogue form to provide a rationale for its continuing use. Accordingly, this is what this paper sets out to do, without impugning the value of the *Missa recitata*.

The Historical Question

3. The saying of Mass without singing, a development unknown among the oriental churches, arose in the West in the 9th century. This met the desire of priests to say a daily Mass, and facilitated the development of chantries. It quickly acquired great pastoral value, in enabling the Faithful to attend a short Mass early in the day, during the working week.
4. Eamon Duffy’s important study of traditional piety in late Medieval England makes clear that the models of lay participation in Low Mass emphasised an awareness of what was taking place at Mass, accompanied by appropriate silent, private prayer.¹⁰ There is nevertheless evidence of the Faithful making the responses in Southern Europe in the 16th century,¹¹ a practice which later disappeared.¹²

⁷ See Appendix A.

⁸ See Appendix B.

⁹ Instruction of the Congregation for Rites *De musica sacra* (1955) 31 (see Appendix B). Similarly, an obligation to promote the *Missa recitata* is suggested by, for example, the words of Cardinal Minoretti of Genoa, who told his clergy in 1934: ‘It is the duty of priests to associate the faithful with the active celebration of the divine Mysteries, and not merely content themselves with silent assistance. The recitation of the rosary, morning prayers, acts of faith etc., are good things. But it is a better thing for the people to join their voice with that of the server and priest at the altar.’ Quoted in Ellard *op. cit.* p63. Many similar examples can be found in Ellard’s book, indicating a strong presumption in favour of the Dialogue Mass; this in fact contrasts with the careful language of Pope Pius XII’s encyclical *Mediator Dei* (see Appendix A) and the overall position of *De musica sacra*.

¹⁰ Eamon Duffy *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c.1400 to 1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) pp117-130. Duffy argues that the books of meditations and devotions for use in Mass were not intended for sung Sunday liturgies, since they make no reference to the Asperges, the Pax, and other ceremonies not found in weekday Low Masses. Duffy elsewhere makes it clear how interested the late Medieval Faithful were in the Mass Propers, taking a close interest in the devotions proper to particular votive Masses, and even requesting them, in preference to Requiems, in their wills.

¹¹ Fr Gerald Ellard SJ quotes Canon Antonio de Beatis, Secretary to Cardinal Louis of Aragon, writing in 1518: ‘The Flemings frequent their churches zealously, but very early in the mornings. The priests are quite slow in saying their Masses, in which they differ a good deal from the Italians, they say them so low that no one hears their voices. They do not permit anyone to make the responses, except the servers, and no one else.’ See Ellard *op. cit.* p14. In his later book *The Mass of the Future* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1948) p103, Ellard quotes the Council of Basle of 1435 criticising the ‘northern’ practice of saying Low Mass so quietly ‘that no one hears their voices’, which implies that the Faithful were not joining in any responses. Josef Jungmann presents a series of references for the Faithful making the responses up to Carolingian times, but Low Mass did not yet exist, and his contrasting it with the modern practice at *Missa Lecta* is misleading (Jungmann *op. cit.* Vol. I pp235-6).

5. A number of factors would have militated against dialoguing at Low Mass, most simply its use for private Masses, at which members of the Faithful might, or might not, be present, and the increasing distance between the Latin of the Mass and the vernaculars of Southern Europe. Non-verbal participation was moreover given a spiritual justification: Duffy quotes a Medieval commentator's explanation for the silent Canon, which has a more general application, as being 'ne impediatur populus orare'.¹³ This tradition found a defender in Pope Pius XII, who strongly rebuked those who criticised forms of liturgical participation in which the Faithful do not follow the liturgy word by word.¹⁴

Dialoguing and Participation

6. Two bad reasons for the 20th century promotion of the Dialogue Mass referred to by Pope Pius XII are, first, the suggestion that the liturgy needs an outward, social aspect, if it is to be a truly public act, and, secondly, the decline of *Missa Solemnis*. Against the first, which had perhaps been encouraged by the febrile atmosphere of the First World War and its aftermath, when the Dialogue Mass was spreading, he emphasised the intrinsically social nature of the liturgy.¹⁵ Against the second he condemned the tendency to see the Dialogue Mass as a substitute for *Missa Solemnis*.¹⁶
7. A better reason was the general principle that the Faithful should both understand what is going on in the liturgy, and enter deeply into its spirit. What *Mediator Dei* and *De musica sacra* stress, however, is that taking part in the dialogue is not the only way to participate worthily in the Mass, and that different people, or even the same people at different times, may have different needs, for which the *Missa recitata* may not be ideal. We might add that today we find deeply established differences of liturgical formation and culture, among those attached to the Extraordinary Form, which have developed since these documents were written.¹⁷
8. While the verbal involvement given by dialoguing is clear enough, the contemplative, non-verbal¹⁸ form of participation made possible by a non-dialogued *Missa lecta* must be articulated.

¹² John Burckard, a Papal Master of Ceremonies, published an *Ordo Missae* of 1502 which refers to 'those present' making the responses with the servers, for example for the Preparatory Prayers, but these references are absent from the 1570 *Missale Romanum*: Ellard compares the rubrics in parallel columns, ('The Dialog Mass' pp32-3). Pope Benedict XIV, writing in 1748, refers to the Faithful making responses as something which happened in past centuries: *ibid.* p34

¹³ 'Lest it impede the praying of the people'. Duffy *op. cit.* p117

¹⁴ Pope Pius XII, Encyclical *Mediator Dei* (1947) 107-108: see Appendix A.

¹⁵ *Mediator Dei* 100: the innovations of the Liturgical Movement 'are by no means necessary to constitute it [sc. the Mass] a public act or to give it a social character.' (See Appendix A.)

¹⁶ *Mediator Dei* 100: 'a "dialogue" Mass of this kind cannot replace the high Mass, which, as a matter of fact, though it should be offered with only the sacred ministers present, possesses its own special dignity due to the impressive character of its ritual and the magnificence of its ceremonies.' (See Appendix A.) A related concern was expressed Bishop McLaughlin of Paterson, USA, in explaining why the Dialogue Mass would not be allowed in that diocese: 'it leads people more and more away from High Mass, which is the one which the faithful should participate in.' Quoted in Ellard *op. cit.* p111.

¹⁷ The two practices are dominant in different geographical areas: the *Missa recitata* is unusual in the English speaking world and Germany, but very common in France, Southern Europe, and elsewhere.

¹⁸ The novelist Evelyn Waugh, writing to Cardinal Heenan in 1964 of his distress about the liturgical changes, commented: 'My trade is in words and I daily become more sceptical about verbal comprehension—especially in the odd hinterland of verbal prayers.' *A Bitter Trial: Evelyn Waugh and John Carmel Cardinal Heenan on the liturgical changes* ed. Scott Reid (Curdrige: Saint Austin Press, 1996) p43.

9. Earlier papers in this series have noted¹⁹ other features of the ancient Roman liturgy, and the historic liturgies of other Rites, appear to impede the immediate verbal participation (hearing and understanding the words), or the seeing of what is going on, but compensate for this by the effect they have on the Faithful, communicating important truths to them non-verbally, most obviously the sense of mystery, and the sacredness of the proceedings, and doing so with great force. In the case of Low Mass, the silence or near-silence of the church, while the priest and the server alone maintain the sacred dialogue within the sanctuary, communicates profoundly the mysterious and other-worldly nature of the liturgy, even to those unfamiliar with it.²⁰ A greater use of silence can foster the sense of mystery which, in sung liturgies, is created by the use of Gregorian Chant and Sacred Polyphony.
10. The subtle difference of overall tempo and volume between a typical *Missa lecta* and a Dialogue Mass is noteworthy: in the former, a contemplative quiet, if not complete silence, is extended throughout the entire liturgy, particularly when Mass is said with a small congregation.²¹
11. In the context of the introduction of the Dialogue Mass, the novelist Evelyn Waugh wrote:

‘Participation’ in the Mass does not mean hearing our own voices. It means God hearing our voices. Only He knows who is ‘participating’ at Mass. I believe, to compare small things with great, that I ‘participate’ in a work of art when I study it and love it silently. No need to shout. ...If the Germans want to be noisy, let them. But why should they disturb our devotions?²²

Blessed Pope John Paul II also emphasised the value of silent participation in the liturgy:

Yet active participation does not preclude the active passivity of silence, stillness and listening: indeed, it demands it. Worshippers are not passive, for instance, when listening to the readings or the homily, or following the prayers of the celebrant, and the chants and music of the liturgy. These are experiences of silence and stillness, but they are in their own way profoundly active. In a culture which neither favours nor fosters meditative quiet, the art of interior

¹⁹ Positio 4: Liturgical Orientation; Positio 7: Latin as a Liturgical Language; Positio 9: Silence and Inaudibility in the Extraordinary Form

²⁰ To give just one example, it made a deep impression on the playwright Oscar Wilde, who refers to the Catholic liturgy more than once in his *De Profundis*, which he wrote while in prison between 1896 and 1897. ‘[W]hen one contemplates all this from the point of view of Art alone one cannot but be grateful that the supreme office of the Church should be the playing of the tragedy without the shedding of blood, the mystical presentation by means of dialogue and costume and gesture even of the Passion of her Lord, and it is always a source of pleasure and awe to me to remember that the ultimate survival of the Greek Chorus, lost elsewhere to art, is to be found in the servitor answering the priest at Mass.’ *De Profundis* (London: Folio Society, 1991), ed. Peter Forster, p63 (p13 of the manuscript).

²¹ The Anglican theologian Charles Harris noted, in his entry on ‘Silence’ in an important High Anglican liturgical reference book (*Liturgy and Worship: A companion to the prayer books of the Anglican Communion* (London: SPCK, 1932) ed W.K. Lowther Clarke), that ‘At the present day not a few Latin Catholics definitely prefer Low to High Mass, partly, it would seem, on account of its brevity and simplicity, but still more on account of the devotional effect of the mystical or subdued voice employed by the celebrant even in those portions of the service intended to be audible.’ (pp774-782; p774)

²² Article in *The Spectator*, 1964; reproduced in *A Bitter Trial* ed. Reid, pp40-1. ‘The Germans’ are picked out perhaps as representative of those enthusiastic about the dialogue Mass (the liturgist Pius Parsch would be an example); the tradition of the German ‘Singmesse’ (Low Mass with hymns) may also be in Waugh’s mind.

listening is learned only with difficulty. Here we see how the liturgy, though it must always be properly inculturated, must also be counter-cultural.²³

12. Silent participation in *Missa lecta* may be accompanied by private, formal prayer, or by following the prayers of the Mass in a Missal. Most simply, however, it is an exercise of contemplative prayer:²⁴ far from being the least intense form of prayer, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us that this is ‘the pre-eminently *intense time* of prayer’.²⁵ Watching and listening, facilitated by the expressive character of the ritual of the Extraordinary Form, will be accompanied by a deep intention of uniting oneself with the offering made on the Altar. This is reminiscent of the silent petition recommended by St Cyprian for the liturgy,²⁶ and the wordless prayer described by St Paul.²⁷ The *Catechism* links contemplative prayer and the liturgy closely,²⁸ and reminds us of the description of prayer given by a peasant to St Jean Vianney: ‘I look at Him, and He looks at me.’²⁹
13. Contemplative participation avoids the danger that, in using a book, which dialoguing tends to encourage, the printed text becomes a barrier between the individual and the

²³ Bl. Pope John Paul II: Address to Bishops of the United States on an *ad limina* visit, October 9, 1998.

²⁴ In a fictional setting, Fr Bryan Houghton describes the participation of the Faithful in the Canon, in the Extraordinary Form, as follows: ‘Some meditate for a moment but soon give up; some thumb a prayer book without much conviction; some finger a rosary without thinking; the majority just sit and kneel and become empty. They have their distractions, of course, but as far as they are able they are recollected. You see, the state of prayer of the overwhelming majority of the faithful is that of “simple regard”.

‘...Human activity is reduced to its minimum. Then the miracle occurs. At the fine apex of their souls, imperceptible even to themselves, the Holy Ghost starts making little shrieks of “Abba, Father” or, after the consecration, soft groans of the Holy Name, “Jesu, Jesu.” They adore: or rather, to be more accurate, the Holy Ghost adores within them.’ Bryan Houghton *Mitre and Crook* (Harrison, NY: Roman Catholic Books, 1979) p44

²⁵ *Catechism* 2714 (emphasis in the original).

²⁶ Cf. St Cyprian, in his treatise on the Lord’s Prayer (Ch 4): ‘And when we meet together with the brethren in one place, and celebrate divine sacrifices with God’s priest, we ought to be mindful of modesty and discipline—not to throw abroad our prayers indiscriminately, with unsubdued voices, nor to cast to God with tumultuous wordiness a petition that ought to be commended to God by modesty; for God is the hearer, not of the voice, but of the heart. Nor need He be clamorously reminded, since He sees men’s thoughts, as the Lord proves to us when He says, “Why think ye evil in your hearts?” (Matth 9:4). And in another place: “And all the churches shall know that I am He that searcheth the hearts and reins” (Apoc 2:23).’

²⁷ Romans 8.26-27: ‘Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity. For we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings. And he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what the Spirit desireth; because he asketh for the saints according to God.’ (‘Similiter autem et Spiritus adiuvat infirmitatem nostram nam quid oremus sicut oportet nescimus sed ipse Spiritus postulat pro nobis gemitibus inenarrabilibus. Qui autem scrutatur corda scit quid desideret Spiritus quia secundum Deum postulat pro sanctis.’)

²⁸ *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2nd Edition (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997): 2711 ‘Entering into contemplative prayer is like entering into the Eucharistic liturgy: we “gather up” the heart, recollect our whole being under the prompting of the Holy Spirit, abide in the dwelling place of the Lord which we are, awaken our faith in order to enter into the presence of him who awaits us.’ 2716 ‘Contemplative prayer is hearing the Word of God. Far from being passive, such attentiveness is the obedience of faith, the unconditional acceptance of a servant, and the loving commitment of a child. It participates in the “Yes” of the Son become servant and the Fiat of God’s lowly handmaid.’ 2718 ‘Contemplative prayer is a union with the prayer of Christ insofar as it makes us participate in his mystery, the mystery of Christ is celebrated by the Church in the Eucharist, and the Holy Spirit makes it come alive in contemplative prayer so that our charity will manifest it in our acts.’

²⁹ *Ibid.* 2715: ‘Contemplation is a gaze of faith, fixed on Jesus. “I look at him and he looks at me”’: this is what a certain peasant of Ars used to say to his holy curé about his prayer before the tabernacle.’ (In French, the peasant’s words were ‘Je L’avise, et Il m’avise’).

liturgy, even undermining the social nature of the Mass which participation in the dialogue might otherwise promote.³⁰

14. Again, the Faithful's participation in Mass without dialoguing avoids a possible over-emphasis, in the Faithful's experience of the Mass, on the parts where there is a dialogue, especially the Preparatory Prayers.³¹ In the Ordinary Form of the Mass this difficulty is addressed by the omission of the Psalm *Iudica*, and the introduction of responses into the Eucharistic Prayers.

Difficulties with introducing the Dialogue Mass

15. Against the view that the *Missa recitata* ought to be introduced wherever possible, even where it is not part of the liturgical culture of a place, a number of further considerations should be borne in mind. One is the difficulty of getting the Faithful to say the responses with 'becoming dignity':³² with correct and consistent pronunciation, and at the same speed.³³ *De musica sacra* warns that only 'well trained,' 'advanced groups' should attempt the more difficult responses; such training is seldom practicable.
16. Again, there is a great potential for confusion, conflict, and upset, in changing long-standing habits of participation; the multiple options about what, exactly, the Faithful should say in a *Missa recitata*, is a further source of confusion.
17. It is sometimes said that the Dialogue Mass is more suited to congregations new to the Extraordinary Form. The challenge of learning the Latin responses, however, undermines this claim; it can be embarrassing to find oneself expected to take part in a way for which one is not prepared. On the other hand, the *Missa lecta*, while very different in feel to the Ordinary Form, is something which a newcomer can get used to in his own time.

³⁰ The historian Pamela Graves criticises the use of devotional aids to Mass in the late Middle Ages in similar terms. 'Whether they followed the Mass in the liturgical books or in a paraphrase and devotional commentary, or they read something unconnected with the service, they were, so to speak, getting their heads down, turning their eyes from the distractions posed by their fellow worshippers, but at the same time taking them off the priest and his movements and gestures. Such folk, in becoming isolated from their neighbours, were also insulating themselves against communal religion.' This is quoted and discussed by Eamon Duffy, *op. cit.* p121. A slightly different criticism has been made of the Ordinary Form from a liturgically 'progressive' perspective: 'the participants can feel obliged to attend to the whole (or else they have not been to Mass properly). Their freedom to pray and contemplate is thus impeded by the text itself.' (Fr John Moffat SJ, *Beyond the Catechism: intellectual exercises for questioning Catholics* (Lulu, 2006) pp159-160.) Without necessarily endorsing either criticism in relation to their specific targets, there is certainly a danger of not being able to see the woods (the Mass as a whole) for the trees (the words of the liturgy), and in focusing attention on a printed text, and not on the sanctuary.

³¹ The historical arguments prized by the Liturgical Movement can even suggest that the Preparatory Prayers do not belong to the Faithful at all. The liturgical scholar Alcuin Reid remarks of these prayers: 'The popularisation of the Low Mass through the so-called "dialogue Mass" obscured their nature as preparatory and thanksgiving prayers and created what may be called a hyper-liturgical devotion by focussing the people's attention on private prayers. As C. Howell, S.J., said in 1958, "The prayers at the foot of the altar do not pertain to the people. There are no historical...pastoral...[or] practical grounds for it. Keep the people out of it" ("Parish in the Life of the Church", p. 18).' Reid *op. cit.* p177 n105

³² *De musica sacra* 31: 'Only more advanced groups who have been well trained will be able to participate with becoming dignity in this manner.' ('Hic ultimus gradus a selectis tantum cultioribus coetibus bene institutis, digne, prouti decet, adhiberi potest.'). quoted in context in Appendix B. It reflects the concern of Pope Pius XII in *Mediator Dei*, that if dialoguing is to take place, it should be 'in an orderly and fitting manner' (*Mediator Dei* 105: see Appendix A).

³³ This is a perennial problem at celebrations of the Ordinary Form in Latin.

Conclusion

18. To reiterate, we have no wish in this paper to challenge, or call for the restriction, of a practice which has sustained the spiritual lives of Catholics attached to the Extraordinary Form for many decades. The aim of this paper is simply to question the presumption that there is something defective about participating in Low Mass without joining in the responses. Low Mass without dialoguing by the Faithful has, in fact, its own rationale, and its own spiritual advantages.

Appendix A: Pope Pius XII on the Dialogue Mass: extract from *Mediator Dei* (1947)

105. Therefore, they are to be praised who, with the idea of getting the Christian people to take part more easily and more fruitfully in the Mass, strive to make them familiar with the “Roman Missal,” so that the faithful, united with the priest, may pray together in the very words and sentiments of the Church. They also are to be commended who strive to make the liturgy even in an external way a sacred act in which all who are present may share. This can be done in more than one way, when, for instance, the whole congregation, in accordance with the rules of the liturgy, either answer the priest in an orderly and fitting manner, or sing hymns suitable to the different parts of the Mass, or do both, or finally in high Masses when they answer the prayers of the minister of Jesus Christ and also sing the liturgical chant.

106. These methods of participation in the Mass are to be approved and recommended when they are in complete agreement with the precepts of the Church and the rubrics of the liturgy. Their chief aim is to foster and promote the people's piety and intimate union with Christ and His visible minister and to arouse those internal sentiments and dispositions which should make our hearts become like to that of the High Priest of the New Testament. However, though they show also in an outward manner that the very nature of the sacrifice, as offered by the Mediator between God and men, must be regarded as the act of the whole Mystical Body of Christ, still they are by no means necessary to constitute it a public act or to give it a social character. And besides, a “dialogue” Mass of this kind cannot replace the high Mass, which, as a matter of fact, though it should be offered with only the sacred ministers present, possesses its own special dignity due to the impressive character of its ritual and the magnificence of its ceremonies. The splendour and grandeur of a high Mass, however, are very much increased if, as the Church desires, the people are present in great numbers and with devotion.

107. It is to be observed, also, that they have strayed from the path of truth and right reason who, led away by false opinions, make so much of these accidentals as to

105. Laudibus igitur ii digni sunt, qui eo consilio ducti, ut christiana plebs Eucharisticum Sacrificium facilius salubriusque participet, «Missale Romanum» apte in populi manibus ponere conantur, ita quidem ut christifideles, una cum sacerdote copulati, iisdem eius verbis iisdemque Ecclesiae sensibus comprecantur; itemque ii laudibus exornandi sunt, qui efficere contendunt, ut Liturgia externo etiam modo actio sacra fiat, quam reapse adstantes omnes communicent. Id quidem non una ratione contingere potest: cum nimirum universus populus, ex sacrorum rituum normis, vel sacerdotis verbis recto servato ordine respondet, vel cantus edit, qui cum variis Sacrificii partibus congruant, vel utrumque facit, vel denique cum in Sacris sollemnibus alternas Iesu Christi administri precibus dat voces unaque simul liturgica cantica concinit.

106. Quae tamen Sacrificii participandi rationes tum diiudandae ac commendandae sunt, cum Ecclesiae praeceptis sacrorumque rituum normis diligenter obtemperant. Eo autem potissimum spectant, ut christianorum pietatem eorumque intimam cum Christo cum eiusque adspectabili administro coniunctionem alant ac foveant, itemque internos illos sensus et habitus excitent, quibus animus noster Summo Sacerdoti Novi Testamenti assimuletur oportet. Nihilominus, quamvis externo quoque modo demonstrent Sacrificium suapte natura, utpote a Mediatore Dei et hominum (cfr. 1 Tim. 2, 5) peractum, totius mystici Corporis Christi opus esse habendum; nequiquam tamen necessariae sunt ad publicam eiusmodi constituendam communemque notam. Ac praeterea id genus Sacrum, alternis vocibus celebratum, in locum augusti Sacrificii sollemniter peracti sufficere non potest; quod quidem, etiamsi adstantibus solummodo sacris ministris fiat, ob rituum maiestatem caerimoniarumque apparatus peculiari fruitur dignitate sua, cuius tamen splendor et amplitudo, si frequens pietateque praestans populus adsit, ut Ecclesiae in votis est, summopere adaugetur.

107. Animadvertendum quoque est eos veritatem egredi rectaque rationis iter, qui fallacibus opinionibus ducti, haec rerum adiuncta tanti faciunt, ut asseverare non

presume to assert that without them the Mass cannot fulfil its appointed end.

108. Many of the faithful are unable to use the Roman missal even though it is written in the vernacular; nor are all capable of understanding correctly the liturgical rites and formulas. So varied and diverse are men's talents and characters that it is impossible for all to be moved and attracted to the same extent by community prayers, hymns and liturgical services. Moreover, the needs and inclinations of all are not the same, nor are they always constant in the same individual. Who, then, would say, on account of such a prejudice, that all these Christians cannot participate in the Mass nor share its fruits? On the contrary, they can adopt some other method which proves easier for certain people; for instance, they can lovingly meditate on the mysteries of Jesus Christ or perform other exercises of piety or recite prayers which, though they differ from the sacred rites, are still essentially in harmony with them.

dubitent, iisdem prae termissis, rem sacram statutum sibi finem assequi non posse.

108. Haud pauci enim e christifidelibus « Missali Romano », etiamsi vulgata lingua exarato, uti nequeunt; neque omnes idonei sunt ad recte, ut addecet, intellegendos ritus ac formulas liturgicas. Ingenium, indoles ac mens hominum tam varia sunt atque ab-similia, ut non omnes queant precibus, canticis sacrisque actionibus, communiter habitis, eodem modo moveri ac duci. Ac praeterea animorum necessitates et propensa eorum studia non eadem in omnibus sunt, neque in singulis semper eadem permanent. Quis igitur dixerit, praeiudicata eiusmodi opinionis compulsus, tot christianos non posse Eucharisticum participare Sacri ieiunium, eiusque perfrui beneficiis? At ii alia ratione utique possunt, quae facilius nonnullis evadit; ut, verbi gratia, Iesu Christi mysteria pie meditando, vel alia peragendo pietatis exercitia aliasque fundendo preces, quae, etsi forma a sacris ritibus differunt, natura tamen sua cum iisdem congruunt.

Appendix B: the Instruction *De musica sacra* on the dialogue Mass (1955)

Participation of the faithful in low Mass.

28. Care must be taken that the faithful assist at low Mass, too, “not as strangers or mute spectators” (*Divini cultus*, Dec. 20, 1928: AAS 21 [1929] 40), but as exercising that kind of participation demanded by so great, and fruitful a mystery.

29. The first way the faithful can participate in the low Mass is for each one, on his own initiative, to pay devout attention to the more important parts of the Mass (interior participation), or by following the approved customs in various localities (exterior participation).

Those who use a small missal, suitable to their own understanding, and pray with priest in the very words of the Church, are worthy of special praise. But all are not equally capable of correctly understanding the rites, and liturgical

De fidelium participatione in Missis lectis

28. Sedulo curandum est, ut fideles, « non tamquam extranei vel muti spectatores » Missae quoque lectae intersint, sed illam praestent participationem, quae a tanto mysterio requiritur, et quae uberrimos affert fructus.

29. Primus autem modus, quo fideles Missae lectae participare possunt, habetur, cum singuli, propria industria, participationem praestant, sive internam, piam scilicet ad potiores Missae partes attentionem, sive externam, iuxta varias regionum probatas consuetudines.

Ii potissimum in hac re laude digni sunt, qui parvum missale, proprio captui accommodatum, prae manibus habentes, una cum sacerdote, eisdem Ecclesiae verbis comprecantur. Cum vero non omnes aequè idonei sint ad ritus ac formulas liturgicas

formulas; nor does everyone possess the same spiritual needs; nor do these needs remain constant in the same individual. Therefore, these people may find a more suitable or easier method of participation in the Mass when “they meditate devoutly on the mysteries of Jesus Christ, or perform other devotional exercises, and offer prayers which, though different in form from those of the sacred rites, are in essential harmony with them” (*Mediator Dei* 39 (1947)).

In this regard, it must be noted that if any local custom of playing the organ during low Mass might interfere with the participation of the faithful, either by common prayer or song, the custom is to be abolished. This applies not only to the organ, but also to the harmonium or any other musical instrument which is played without interruption. Therefore, in such Masses, there should be no instrumental music at the following times:

- a. After the priest reaches the altar until the Offertory;
- b. From the first versicles before the Preface until the *Sanctus* inclusive;
- c. From the Consecration until the *Pater Noster*, where the custom obtains;
- d. From the *Pater Noster* to the *Agnus Dei* inclusive; at the Confiteor before the Communion of the faithful; while the Postcommunion prayer is being said, and during the Blessing at the end of the Mass.

30. The faithful can participate another way at the Eucharistic Sacrifice by saying prayers together or by singing hymns. The prayers and hymns must be chosen appropriately for the respective parts of the Mass, and as indicated in paragraph 14c.

31. A final method of participation, and the most perfect form, is for the congregation to make the liturgical responses to the prayers of the priest, thus holding a sort of dialogue with him, and reciting aloud the parts which properly belong to them.

There are four degrees or stages of this participation:

- a) First, the congregation may make the easier liturgical responses to the prayers of the priest: *Amen; Et cum spiritu tuo; Deo gratias; Gloria tibi Domine; Laus tibi, Christe; Habemus ad Dominum; Dignum et iustum est; Sed libera nos a malo;*

recte intellegend as, et cum praeterea animorum necessitates non eadem in omnibus sint, neque in singulis semper eadem permaneant, his alia vel aptior vel facilior participationis ratio occurrit, scilicet « Iesu Christi mysteria pie meditando, vel alia peragendo pietatis exercitia aliasque fundendo preces, quae, etsi forma a sacris ritibus differunt, natura tamen sua cum iisdem congruunt »).

Notandum insuper, quod si alicubi, inter Missam lectam, mos vigeat organum sonandi, quin fideles sive communibus precibus, sive cantu Missae participant, reprobandus est usus, organum, harmonium, aut aliud musicum instrumentum quasi sine intermissione sonandi. Haec igitur instrumenta sileant :

- a) Post ingressum sacerdotis celebrantis ad altare, usque ad Offertorium;
- b) A primis versiculis ante Praefationem usque ad *Sanctus* inclusive ;
- c) Ubi consuetudo viget, a Consecratione usque ad *Pater noster*;
- d) Ab oratione dominica usque ad *Agnus Dei* inclusive ; ad confessionem ante Communionem fidelium ; dum dicitur Postcommunio et datur *Benedictio* in fine Missae.

30. Secundus participationis modus habetur, cum fideles Sacrificio eucharistico participant, communes preces et cantus proferendo. Providendum, ut et preces et cantus singulis Missae partibus apprime congruant, firmo tamen praescripto n. 14 c.

31. Tertius denique isque plenior modus obtinetur, cum fideles sacerdoti celebranti liturgice respondent, quasi cum illo « dialogando », et partes sibi proprias clara voce dicendo.

Quatuor vero gradus plenioris huius participationis distingui possunt:

- a) Primus gradus, si fideles sacerdoti celebranti faciliora responsa liturgica reddunt, scilicet : *Amen; Et cum spiritu tuo; Deo gratias; Gloria tibi, Domine; Laus tibi, Christe; Habemus ad Dominum; Dignum et iustum est; Sed libera nos a malo;*

b) Secondly, the congregation may also say prayers, which, according to the rubrics, are said by the server, including the *Confiteor*, and the triple *Domine non sum dignus* before the faithful receive Holy Communion;

c) Thirdly, the congregation may say aloud with the celebrant parts of the Ordinary of the Mass: *Gloria in excelsis Deo; Credo; Sanctus-Benedictus; Agnus Dei;*

d) Fourthly, the congregation may also recite with the priest parts of the Proper of the Mass: Introit, Gradual, Offertory, Communion. Only more advanced groups who have been well trained will be able to participate with becoming dignity in this manner.

32. Since the *Pater Noster* is a fitting, and ancient prayer of preparation for Communion, the entire congregation may recite this prayer in unison with the priest in low Masses; the Amen at the end is to be said by all. This is to be done only in Latin, never in the vernacular.

33. The faithful may sing hymns during low Mass, if they are appropriate to the various parts of the Mass.

34. Where the rubrics prescribe the *clara voce*, the celebrant must recite the prayers loud enough so that the faithful can properly, and conveniently follow the sacred rites. This must be given special attention in a large church, and before a large congregation.

b) Secundus gradus, si fideles partes insuper proferunt, quae a ministrante, iuxta rubricas, sunt dicendae; et, si sacra Communio infra Missam distribuitur, confessionem quoque dicunt et ter Domine, non sum dignus;

c) Tertius gradus, si fideles partes quoque ex Ordinario Missae scilicet: Gloria in excelsis Deo; Credo; Sanctus-Benedictus; Agnus Dei, una cum sacerdote celebrante recitant;

d) Quartus denique gradus, si fideles partes quoque ad Proprium Missae pertinentes : Introitum; Graduale; Offertorium; Communionem, una cum sacerdote celebrante proferunt. Hic ultimus gradus a selectis tantum cultioribus coetibus bene institutis, digne, prouti decet, adhiberi potest.

32. In Missis lectis totum Pater noster, cum apta sit et antiqua precatio ad Communionem, a fidelibus una cum sacerdote celebrante recitari potest, lingua vero latina tantum, et addito ab omnibus Amen, exclusa quavis recitatione in lingua vulgari.

33. In Missis lectis cantus populares religiosi a fidelibus cantari possunt, servata tamen hac lege, ut singulis Missae partibus plane congruant (cfr. n. 14 b).

34. Sacerdos celebrans, potissimum si aula ecclesiae magna sit et populus frequentior, ea omnia, quae secundum rubricas clara voce pronuntiare debet, adeo elata voce dicat, ut omnes fideles sacram actionem opportune et commode sequi possint.