

RENEWAL OR REVOLUTION - THE POST-VATICAN II LITURGICAL REFORM?

By Michael Davies

The lecture that I shall be giving this evening will be radical in the literal sense of this term, that is, getting to the very roots of the topic discussed. Radix is the Latin word for root. I will put forward five theses which I am sure are incontrovertible. I am applying them only to the western world, basically Europe and the English-speaking countries.

Proposition One

My first proposition is that the period following the Second Vatican Council has been disastrous for the Church and has produced no good fruits. In a statement published in the 24 December 1984 English edition of L'Osservatore Romano Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger remarked:

Certainly the results (of Vatican II) seem cruelly opposed to the expectations of everyone, beginning with those of Pope John XXIII and then of Pope Paul VI: expected was a new Catholic unity and instead we have been exposed to dissension which, to use the words of Pope Paul VI, seem to have gone from self-criticism to self-destruction. Expected was a new enthusiasm, and many wound up discouraged and bored.

Expected was a great step forward, instead we find ourselves faced with a progressive process of decadence which has developed for the most part under the sign of a calling back to the Council, and has therefore contributed to discrediting it for many. The net result therefore seems negative. I am repeating here what I said ten years after the conclusion of the work: it is incontrovertible that this period has definitely been unfavourable for the Catholic Church.

Cardinal Ratzinger is echoing the judgement made in 1968, only three years after the closure of the Council, by the great French Oratorian and liturgist Father Louis Bouyer: "Unless we are blind, we must even state bluntly that what we see looks less like the hoped-for regeneration of Catholicism than its accelerated decomposition." [1] The Homiletic and Pastoral Review is the most important journal for priests in the English-speaking world. In the November 1971 issue its editor, Father Kenneth Baker wrote:

With each Year it seems that we get closer to an "American Church" separate from Rome. For millions of Catholics it already exists in fact, though not yet officially (De facto but not De iure). Even though the entrenched bureaucracy will not admit it, the Church here is in bad shape. There has been a loss of morale and élan. But what should one expect when most Catholic children do not know the basics of the faith, when heresy is openly taught and defended in "Catholic" universities, when seminarians have declined from 48,000 to about 5,000, and when only 14 million out of 55[2] million Catholics go to Church regularly on Sunday? It is not an exaggeration to say that the Church here is in a crisis.

The situation has worsened considerably in the twenty-eight years since Father Baker gave us this gloomy assessment.[3] The official 1998 Catholic Directory for the USA reveals that the number of seminarians is now only 1700, a decline of almost 97% from the 1965 figure. If this is a renewal of the Faith, may God help us if a decline sets in. Cardinal John Heenan, Archbishop of Westminster, England, warned in 1972 that: "One does not need to be a prophet to realize that without a dramatic reversal of the present trend there will be no future for the Church in English-speaking countries." [4] In England and Wales this decomposition has accelerated to the extent that unless it is immediately and drastically curtailed Catholicism will have no more than a vestigial presence in those countries within the next twenty years. In countries such as Scotland and Australia the decomposition is proceeding at an even faster pace. Cardinal Paul Poupard, President of the Pontifical Council for Culture, stated bluntly in January this year: "The dechristianization of Europe is a reality." [5] Cardinal Daneels of Brussels in Belgium stated in an interview given in England in May warned that the Church in Europe is facing extinction.[6] During the Synod of European Bishops in October 1999, Mgr. Fernando Sebastián Aguilar, Archbishop of Pamplona gave the following gloomy but realistic assessment of Spanish Catholicism:

For 40 or 50 years, Spanish society has moved far away from the Church and the explicit acknowledgement of the treasures of the Kingdom of God. Cultural and spiritual secularisation has affected many members of the Church. The result of this has been the weakening of the faith and divine revelation, the theoretical and practical questioning of Christian moral teaching, the massive abandonment of attending Sunday Mass, the non-acceptance of the Magisterium of the Church in those points that do not coincide with the trends of the dominant culture. The cultural convictions on which social life is based are undermined and are more atheistic than Christian.

Is there any country in the western world where this is not the case?

I do not wish to argue that the collapse of Catholicism throughout the western world since the Second Vatican Council is due entirely or even principally to the liturgical revolution. The abandonment of the Traditional Mass is a symptom and not the cause of the present débâcle. The true cause is the abandonment to all intents and purposes of the fundamental doctrine that Christ is the King of nations as well as individuals.

We are told that the new vernacular liturgy has rejuvenated Catholicism, despite the four hundred mistranslations in the atrocious ICEL version inflicted upon English-speaking Catholics. It is claimed that ordinary Catholics who were previously apathetic due to the uninspiring Latin Mass, which they could not understand, are now zealous in the practice of their faith. We are supposed to be living in a second Pentecost. It is hard to see how this can be the case when the vast majority of the faithful no longer assist at Mass, and when the fundamental moral teaching of the Church is now almost universally ignored. Catholics in the West are contracepting their Church into oblivion I have been urged on occasions to take a more balanced approach to Vatican II in my writing and my lectures, and to stress the good fruits of the Council. I will deal with the good fruits of Vatican II in one sentence. There are none. If anyone here today can name any aspect of Catholic life which has been strengthened and is more vibrant than before the Council I would be most interested to hear of it. Every aspect of Catholicism in the western world which is subject to statistical verification shows a decline which in many cases must be described as catastrophic. To repeat the conclusion of Cardinal Ratzinger that I have already cited: “It is incontrovertible that this period has definitely been unfavourable for the Catholic Church.”

Proposition Two

My second proposition is that the radical liturgical reform which followed the Council has been a principal contributory factor to the present disastrous situation of the Church. In his Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus Quintus Annus* of 4 December 1988, commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Liturgy Constitution, Pope John Paul II explained, quoting the Liturgy Constitution itself, that the objectives of the

liturgical reform were: "To impart an ever increasing vigour to the Christian life of the faithful; to adapt more suitably to the needs of our own times those who believe in Christ; to strengthen whatever can help to call the whole of humanity into the household of the Church". It is incontrovertible that these objectives have not been obtained. Throughout the west we see a decreasing vigour in the life of the faithful as all the statistics I have quoted prove. But to what extent has the liturgical reform which has manifestly failed to achieve its objectives also contributed to the decline in every important aspect of Catholic life? I would say to a considerable extent.

One of the principal characteristics religion and of the Catholic liturgy is stability. "Blessed be God!" wrote Cardinal Newman, "We have not to find the Truth, it is put into our hands; we have but to commit it to our hearts, to preserve it inviolate, and to deliver it over to our posterity." [7] The American historian, Professor James Hitchcock, insists that:

Catholicism, although open to change, manifests a decided bias toward stability and toward the preservation of the past. This is because one of its principal tasks in the world is to witness to the reality of eternity; hence it cultivates what is timeless, enduring, and stable to serve as hints of eternity. [8]

"Sacred rituals," he adds, "cannot be reformed substantially without serious dislocation in the society whose symbols they are." [9] He expresses well the total incompatibility of any radical reform of the Catholic liturgy with the ethos and traditions of the Church:

The radical and deliberate alteration of ritual leads inevitably to the radical alteration of belief as well. This radical alteration causes an immediate loss of contact with the living past of the community, which comes instead to be a deadening burden. The desire to shed the burden of the past is incompatible with Catholicism, which accepts history as an organic development from ancient roots and expresses this acceptance in a deep respect for Tradition. [10]

In May 1978, Peter L. Berger, a Lutheran professor of Sociology, commented on the post-conciliar changes within the Catholic Church from the dispassionate standpoint of a professional sociologist, and insisted that the changes were a mistake even from a sociological standpoint: "If a thoroughly malicious sociologist, bent on injuring the Catholic Church as much as possible, had been an adviser to the Church he could hardly have done a better job." [11] Professor Dietrich von Hildebrand made the same point even more forcefully when he wrote: "Truly, if one of the devils in C. S. Lewis's

The Screwtape Letters had been entrusted with the ruin of the liturgy he could not have done it better." [12] Cardinal Ratzinger assures us that the late Msgr. Klaus Gamber, Director of the Liturgical Institute of Ratisbonne, was "the one scholar who, among the army of pseudo-liturgists, truly represents the liturgical thinking of the centre of the Church." [13] In his book, *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy*, Mgr Gamber writes: :

The liturgical reform, welcomed with so much idealism and hope by so many priests and lay people alike has turned out to be a liturgical destruction of startling proportions - a *débâcle* worsening with each passing year. Instead of the hoped-for renewal of the Church and of Catholic life, we are now witnessing a dismantling of the traditional values and piety on which our faith rests. Instead of the fruitful renewal of the liturgy, what we see is a destruction of the forms of the Mass which had developed organically during the course of many centuries. [14]

The judgement of Mgr Gamber that the liturgical reform has degenerated into a *débâcle* is certainly endorsed by Article 69 of the Working Document for the 1999 Synod of European bishops. It accepts that:

In many countries of the West, liturgical celebrations are frequented almost exclusively by children and older people, especially women. The young and middle-aged are few in number. Such a situation runs the risk of projecting an image of a Church which is only for the elderly, women and children...some speak of experiences which, so as to reach those in a world in which the emotional side of religion is emphasised, choose not to follow the established norms but invent and improvise in liturgical celebrations and encounters of prayer, thereby demonstrating an unacceptable liturgical creativity which knows no bounds.

Is it in any way disloyal to suggest that Pope Paul VI made an imprudent practical decision in 1970 when he decided to replace the Missal of St. Pius V with his own new Missal? The answer has been provided for us by one of the most loyal and learned Catholics of this or any other generation - Professor Dietrich von Hildebrand:

In the case of practical as distinguished from theoretical authority, which refers, of course, to the ordinances of the Pope, the protection of the Holy Spirit is not promised in the same way. Ordinances can be unfortunate, ill conceived, even disastrous, and there have been many such in the history of the Church. Here *Roma locuta, causa finita* does not hold. The faithful are not obliged to regard all ordinances as good and

desirable. They can regret them and pray that they be taken back; indeed, they can work, with all due respect for the pope, for their elimination. [15]

This great philosopher condemned the folly of those priests who imagine that the Mass will mean nothing to the ordinary faithful unless it resembles as closely as possible what they encounter in their everyday lives. He describes as follows the fundamental error of today's all powerful liturgical bureaucracy:

They seem to be unaware of the elementary importance of sacredness in religion. Thus, they dull the sense of the sacred and thereby undermine true religion. Their "democratic" approach makes them overlook the fact that in all men who have a longing for God there is also a longing for the sacred and a sense of difference between the sacred and the profane. The worker or peasant has this sense as much as any intellectual. If he is a Catholic, he will desire to find a sacred atmosphere in the church, and this remains true whether the world is urban, industrial or not. [16]

Has the reformed liturgy retained let alone intensified the sacred atmosphere which characterises the Traditional Mass? In a detailed study of over a thousand Catholic parishes in the United States twenty years after Vatican II, Professor Mark Searle reported that: "Rarely was there an atmosphere of deep prayerful involvement." [17] He would reach the same conclusion by being present at a typical parish Mass in any English-speaking country. The Council called for *participatio actuosa* by the faithful, the words "active participation" do not occur anywhere in its Liturgy Constitution. *Participatio actuosa* means deeply prayerful involvement, and if this deeply prayerful is absent from the typical vernacular celebration, then the reform has failed.

For a final comment on the causal connection between the post-conciliar débâcle and the reform I will quote Cardinal Ratzinger: "I am convinced that the crisis in which we find ourselves today depends in great part on the collapse of the liturgy." [18]

Proposition 3

This brings me to my third proposition, that such a radical reform is without precedent in two thousand years of Christianity apart from the changes imposed by the sixteenth century Protestant Reformers. Before explaining this I will make some brief comments concerning the nature of the Mass and the development of the liturgy of the Roman Rite. The Mass is at the centre of Catholic life just as Christ is the central figure in the Christian religion. As well as being a sacrifice it is the greatest of all the

sacraments as it contains Christ Himself. It not only symbolizes or represents the Passion and death of Christ but contains it—the Mass is the Sacrifice of the Cross, a fact which St. Thomas Aquinas illustrates by quoting St. Ambrose: "In Christ was offered up a sacrifice capable of giving eternal salvation; what then do we do? Do we not offer it up every day in memory of His death?"[19] It would be impossible to write anything which could exaggerate the importance of the Mass. It is the centre of Christian life just as Christ is the central figure of the Christian religion. During the last Supper Our Lord commanded His Apostles, the first bishops, to do what He had done in memory of Him. A definite pattern for the celebration of the Eucharist had developed within decades of the death of Our Lord, a pattern which can be discerned clearly in the finalized Roman Mass of 1570.

There was a gradual and natural liturgical development. With the prayers and ceremonial actions developing into set forms. The rite of Mass that we are discussing is the classic Mass of the Roman Rite, the rite to which we belong. The pontificate of St. Gregory the Great is the crucial epoch in the history of our rite. He became Pope in 590 and reigned until 604. His achievements during those fourteen years almost defy credibility. Prominent among the many important reforms that he undertook was that of the liturgy, which, in every important respect he left in the state that we still have it. The keynote of the reform of St. Gregory was fidelity to the traditions that had been handed down (the root meaning of the Latin word *traditio* is to hand over or hand down). The Order of Mass as found in the 1570 Missal of St. Pius V corresponds very closely with the order established by St. Gregory. It is also to this great Pope that we owe, to a large extent, the codification of the incomparable chant that bears his name.

Subsequent Developments

Although the rite of Mass did continue to develop after the time of St. Gregory, Father Adrian Fortescue, England's greatest liturgist, explains that:

All later modifications were fitted into the old arrangement, and the most important parts were not touched. From, roughly, the time of St. Gregory we have the text of the Mass, its order and arrangement, as a sacred tradition that no one has ventured to touch except in unimportant details. [20]

The sound and invariable practice of the Church and in the East and in the West of holding fast to what had been handed down was breached for the first time by the sixteenth century Protestant Reformers. They broke with the tradition of the Church by the very fact of initiating a drastic reform of liturgical rites, and this would have still been the case even had their reformed liturgies been orthodox. The nature of their heresy was made clear not so much by what their rites contained as by what they omitted from the traditional books. All the Protestant reformers excised with surgical precision prayers which made explicit the sacrificial nature of the Mass.

The Reform of St. Pius V

The Missal of St. Pius V was compiled and published in obedience to the Fathers of the Council of Trent. Father Fortescue cites liturgical continuity as the principal characteristic of the Missal promulgated by St. Pius V with the Bull *Quo Primum Tempore*, 14 July 1570. Just as was the case with the reform of St. Gregory, the keynote of the reform of St Pius V was fidelity to tradition. It would be impossible to lay too much stress upon the fact that St. Pius V did not promulgate a new Order of Mass (*Novus Ordo Missæ*). The Catholic instinct has been to hold fast to what has been handed down and look upon any novelty with the utmost suspicion. Writing in 1912 Father Fortescue was able to comment with satisfaction:

The Missal of Pius V is the one we still use. Later revisions are of slight importance. No doubt in every reform one may find something that one would have preferred not to change. Still, a just and reasonable criticism will admit that Pius V's restoration was on the whole eminently satisfactory. The standard of the commission was antiquity. They abolished later ornate features and made for simplicity, yet without destroying all those picturesque elements that add poetic beauty to the severe Roman Mass. They expelled the host of long sequences that crowded Mass continually, but kept what are undoubtedly the five best; they reduced processions and elaborate, ceremonial, yet kept the really pregnant ceremonies, candles, ashes, palms and the beautiful Holy Week rites. Certainly we in the West may be very glad that we have the Roman rite in the form of Pius V's Missal. [21]

Revisions after 1570

There have been revisions since the reform of St. Pius V, but in no way did they affect the ethos of the Missal. The most significant revision was that of Pope Pius XII who, on 16 November 1955, approved the Decree *Maxima redemptionis*, reforming the Holy Week ceremonies. This reform, like those of St. Gregory and St. Pius V, was characterized by fidelity to tradition and was accepted throughout the Roman Rite without opposition.

Proposition Four

My fourth proposition is that the changes imposed on us in the name of the Second Vatican Council do not represent the wishes of the bishops who voted for the conciliar Liturgy Constitution. On 3rd April 1969 Pope Paul VI announced in his Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum*, that the Missal promulgated in 1570 by his illustrious predecessor, St. Pius V, was to be replaced by one promulgated on his own authority. Pope Paul VI believed that he could improve upon the perfection of the Missal of St Pius V. He broke with the invariable tradition of all his predecessors to do something which, as I explained in Proposition Three, with the single exception of the Protestant Reformation was hitherto unknown in the history of the Church in the East or the West. She authorized a remodelling of the existing rites in the most drastic manner, including the composition of a new order of Mass, a *Novus Ordo Missæ*. It is claimed that this was done in obedience to the Second Vatican Council and in this respect I feel fully justified in citing the dictum *post hoc non ergo propter hoc*. Because a change followed the Council it was not necessarily mandated by the Council.

Before examining the liturgical revolution imposed in the name of the Council it is necessary to be clear as to precisely what the Liturgy Constitution of the Second Vatican Council mandated. By no possible stretch of the imagination can this constitution be interpreted as mandating or sanctioning the destruction of the Roman Rite and the sanctuaries in which it was celebrated. It contained stipulations which appeared to make any drastic remodelling of the traditional Mass impossible. The Latin language was to be preserved in the Latin rites (Article 36), and steps were to be taken to ensure that the faithful could sing or say together in Latin those parts of the Mass that pertain to them (Article 54). All lawfully acknowledged rites were held to be of equal authority and dignity, and were to be preserved in the future and

fostered in every way (Article 4). The treasury of sacred music was to be preserved and fostered with great care (Article 114), and Gregorian chant was to be given pride of place in liturgical services (Article 116). There were to be no innovations unless the good of the Church genuinely and certainly required them, and care was to be taken that any new forms adopted should grow in some way organically from forms already existing (Article 23).

The explicit commands of Vatican II have been contradicted in almost every parish in the West. The Latin language has virtually vanished from our churches, and not the least effort is being made in 99.9% of parishes to ensure that the faithful can sing or say together in Latin those parts of the Mass that pertain to them. Far from preserving and fostering the Roman Rite it has been destroyed, and the treasury of sacred music, Gregorian Chant in particular, has been all but forgotten in the majority of parishes. Young people throughout the world are being drawn in millions to the sublime beauty of Gregorian chant, but, alas, they find it in record shops and not in Catholic churches. I must make a special mention here of the stunning video Tradition made here in Kansas City which features a beautiful Gregorian Solemn Mass sung by Father Josef Bisig. It should be in every traditional Catholic home to be shown to non-traditional friends at every opportunity.

I will spend a few minutes examining one of the specific commands of the Council Fathers that I have just cited, that there were to be no innovations unless the good of the Church genuinely and certainly required them, and I will examine this requirement from the standpoint of prayers removed from the Mass of St Pius V. Our liturgical bureaucrats can point out that some of the prayers in the Mass of St Pius V were not used in primitive forms of the Mass. This is true, but as I have already explained, as the centuries passed prayers and ceremonies were absorbed into the Mass which gave ever clearer expression to its doctrinal meaning. The Protestant Reformers removed such prayers. The Anglican Church Times made a very profound observation in an editorial approving their action: "They actually cut out the references to sacrifice which the older formula contained. To cut out is a more significant action than to refrain from putting it." [22] There is thus far more doctrinal significance in removing a prayer from an existing rite than the absence of that prayer from an earlier rite in which had not yet been incorporated.

Let us begin at the beginning. The psalm *Judica me* with its reference to the priest going to the altar of God has been abolished. It is true that it is not necessary for the validity of the Mass, as is the case with the other prayers that I will be citing, but the Council did not state that there were to be no innovations unless prayers were not essential to the validity of the Mass, but only if the good of the Church genuinely and certainly required them. Well, did the good of the Church genuinely and certainly require that the *Judica me* should be abolished? Did the words of this inspiring Psalm harm our faith, do Catholics who assist at the New Mass have a stronger faith than we do because they no longer hear the words: “O send out Thy light and Thy truth: they have led me and brought me unto Thy holy hill, even to Thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God who giveth joy to my youth”? Unless the good of the Church genuinely and certainly required the removal of this psalm, those who removed it have been disobedient to the Council - and yet we are supposed to be the rebels! What I have said here applies to every omission that I shall list. The double Confiteor which distinguished so clearly between priest and people has gone. It is possible by using such options as Eucharistic Prayer II, the so-called “mini-canon”, to have an entire order of Mass during which no distinction is made between priest and faithful except with the *Orate fratres*, and in its English version reference is made to “our sacrifice” rather than “your sacrifice and mine”.

This can give the idea that the Mass is a concelebration of all present with the priest, or president, being no more than a spokesman for the people - which is the teaching of the Protestant sects. While ascending to the altar the priest recites a beautiful prayer, the *Aufer a nobis*, which evokes the entry of the Jewish High Priest entering the Holy of Holies in the Temple in Jerusalem: “Take from us our iniquities, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that with pure minds we may worthily enter the holy of holies.” Did the good of the Church genuinely and certainly require that this beautiful and evocative prayer should be abolished? When the priest reaches the altar he kisses it where the altar stone containing the relics of saints and martyrs is located, saying: “We beseech Thee, O Lord, by the merits of Thy saints, whose relics are here, and of all the saints, that thou wouldst vouchsafe to forgive me all my sins.” The reason for the abolition of this prayer is not that the good of the Church genuinely and certainly required it but because in the new Mass an altar stone with relics is only an optional extra. Perhaps the most deplorable of all these deplorable omissions is the suppression of the sublime Offertory prayers. Let me quote just one, the *Suscipe, sancte Pater*:

Receive, O holy Father, almighty and eternal God, this spotless host, which I thine unworthy servant, offer unto Thee, my living and true God, for mine own countless sins, transgressions and failings; for all here present and for all faithful Christians, living and dead: that it may avail both me and them unto salvation in eternal life.

Could you possibly imagine a more perfect exposition of the sacrificial nature of the Mass which lies at the heart of our faith? Did the good of the Church genuinely and certainly require that this prayer, and the equally sublime prayers that follow, must be abolished? I will cite just two more examples, both from the conclusion of the Mass: the *Placeat tibi* and the Last Gospel. The *Placeat tibi* was a *bête noire* for all the Protestant Reformers:

May the homage of my bounden duty be pleasing to Thee, O holy Trinity; and grant that the sacrifice, which I, though unworthy, have offered in the sight of Thy majesty may be acceptable to Thee, and through Thy mercy be a propitiation for me and for all those for whom I have offered it.

By what possible stretch of the imagination could the good of the Church genuinely and certainly have required the abolition of a prayer so clearly expressing the nature of the Mass as a propitiatory sacrifice? And what can one say of the Last Gospel? Is there a more inspiring passage in the whole of the Sacred Scriptures?

That was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them he gave the power to become the sons of God: to them that were born of His name: who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. *ET VERBUM CARO FACTUM EST, et habitavit in nobis: et vidimus gloriam ejus, gloriam quasi Unigeniti a Patre, plenum gratiae et veritatis.*

I ask you once more, did the good of the Church genuinely and certainly require the suppression of this inspired evocation of the Incarnation, the event in history which is the foundation upon which our entire Catholic faith is built? And why was the genuflection at the mention of the Incarnation during the Creed also suppressed? How did this suppression contribute to the good of the Church?

It is surely not without significance that all the prayers that I have just listed as being removed from the Missal of St Pius V were also removed from the Missals in use in the sixteenth century by the Protestant Reformers. Commenting in 1898 upon the

manner in which Thomas Cranmer, the apostate Archbishop of Canterbury, had mutilated the Sarum Mass by removing specifically sacrificial prayers when revising it to concoct his English Communion Service, the Catholic bishops of the Province of Westminster remarked:

That in earlier times local churches were permitted to add new prayers and ceremonies is acknowledged . . . But that they were also permitted to subtract prayers and ceremonies in previous use, and even to remodel the existing rites in the most drastic manner, is a proposition for which we know of no historical foundation, and which appears to us absolutely incredible. Hence Cranmer, in taking this unprecedented course, acted, in our opinion, with the most inconceivable rashness." [23]

There is not a single word in a single Council document which even hints at the possibility of completely vernacular Masses, Mass facing the people, tearing tabernacles from the high altar, smashing sanctuary rails, smashing altars and replacing them by tables, standing for Communion, Communion in the hand, Communion under both kinds on Sundays, extraordinary ministers of Communion, clowns, female acolytes, dancing girls, banjos, or balloons. What have such practices to do with the making present of the Sacrifice of Calvary? "The Passion of the Lord is the Sacrifice we offer," wrote St. Cyprian. [24] Would priests who have girls cavorting around the sanctuary during the celebrating of Mass really have found it appropriate for them to dance around the Cross at Calvary while Our Blessed Lord underwent his passion?

The *Novus Ordo Missæ* as published in 1969 was not so much envisaged let alone mandated by the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council, who would most certainly not have voted for it. . Let me quote Msgr. Gamber once more: "One statement we can make with certainty is that the new *Ordo* of the Mass that has now emerged would not have been endorsed by the majority of the Council Fathers." [25]

Father Joseph Gelineau was described by Archbishop Bugnini, the Great Architect of the liturgical revolution, as one of the "great masters of the international liturgical world". [26] He was one of the most influential members of the *Consilium* which concocted the New Mass and one of the most active in imposing it. In his book, *Demain la liturgie*, Father Joseph Gelineau commented with commendable honesty, and not the least sign of regret:

Let those who like myself have known and sung a Latin-Gregorian High Mass remember it if they can. Let them compare it with the Mass that we now have. Not only the words, the melodies, and some of the gestures are different. To tell the truth it is a different liturgy of the Mass. This needs to be said without ambiguity: the Roman Rite as we knew it no longer exists (*Le rite romain tel que nous l'avons connu n'existe plus*). It has been destroyed (*il est détruit*). [27]

The Council commanded that all lawfully acknowledged rites were to be preserved in the future and fostered in every way. Father Gelineau testifies, and who is better qualified to do so, that the Roman Rite has been destroyed. How you preserve and foster a rite by destroying is something that I have yet to see explained. Father Joseph Gelineau has also testified to the fact that what has taken place since the Council is a revolution that went far beyond what the Council Fathers intended. His testimony must surely be conclusive. Father Gelineau writes:

It would be false to identify this liturgical renewal with the reform of rites decided on by Vatican II. This reform goes back much further and goes forward far beyond the conciliar prescriptions (*elle va bien au-delà*). The liturgy is a permanent workshop (*la liturgie est un chantier permanent*). [28]

So there we have it. In place of the moderate reform sanctioned by the Liturgy Constitution, the Mass of the Roman Rite, surely the Church's greatest treasure apart from the Scriptures themselves, has been reduced on a practical level to a permanent workshop, something done by the people rather than an action of Christ. This is a fact deplored by Cardinal Ratzinger, who comments in his book *Feast of Faith*: “Today we might ask: Is there a Latin Rite anymore? Certainly there is no awareness of it. To most people the liturgy appears to be rather something for the individual congregation to arrange.”

I therefore submit that the answer to the question posed in the title of my talk: *Renewal or Revolution - the Post-Vatican II Liturgical Reform? Is Revolution*. I am sure that some of you guessed that this would be the case.

Proposition Five

My fifth and final proposition is that it is essential for the good of the Church in the coming millennium that all restrictions on the use of the pre-Vatican II liturgical books are removed. On 2nd July 1988 His Holiness Pope John Paul II promulgated his Motu Proprio "Ecclesia Dei" in which he expressed his will to guarantee respect for the rightful aspirations of those attached to the Latin liturgical tradition, and in order to achieve this aim he established the Pontifical Commission Ecclesia Dei. Many bishops have responded to this admonition in a very positive manner, and in most dioceses where this has been the case there are no longer any restrictions attached to the celebration of the Tridentine Mass. Hundreds of such Masses are now celebrated in parish churches, in Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and throughout the USA. They are scheduled public Masses fulfilling the Sunday obligation which any member of the faithful is welcome to attend. Many bishops, alas, have defied the clearly expressed will of the Holy Father and refuse to permit the traditional Mass in their dioceses. This Holy Father's positive attitude towards the Traditional Mass has also been reflected by the establishment of at least fifteen priestly societies and monastic communities which use only the 1962 liturgical books. During the October 1998 pilgrimage to Rome to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Motu Proprio "Ecclesia Dei", which was attended by almost three thousand Catholics of whom at least two thirds must have been under the age of forty, Cardinal Ratzinger gave a lecture on 24 October in which he expressed unqualified satisfaction at the fact that these societies are attracting large numbers of vocations. He stated that:

The various communities that were born thanks to this pontifical text have given the Church a great number of priestly and religious vocations who, zealously, joyfully and deeply united with the Pope, give their service to the Gospel in our present era of history. Through them, many of the faithful have been confirmed in the joy of being able to live the liturgy, and confirmed in their love for the Church, or perhaps they have rediscovered both. In many dioceses - and their number is not so small! - they serve the Church in collaboration with the Bishops and in fraternal union with those faithful who do feel at home with the renewed form of the new liturgy. All this cannot but move us to gratitude today!

The priestly society of Saint Peter is at present building a brand new seminary in the USA at a cost of \$14,000,000 to cope with its influx of vocations. The Fraternity of St Peter has had some serious problems in the past two years, but it has certainly survived what can properly be called a crisis. It now has two dozen communities in the USA reaching from the Pacific North West to the deep south. Bishops are now actually asking the Fraternity to send them priests, but in some cases they have to wait for a year or so as it is now stretched to its capacity. This year there are fifty students in its American seminary. The appointment of Father Paul Carr as Superior for the USA is very good news. The Fraternity will continue to flourish in the USA under his leadership as it did under that of Father Devillers. I must mention also the Institute of Christ the King which now has a flourishing apostolate in the United States. It operates in three dioceses and in each case has been given a beautiful church. I must also mention the Society of St Pius X which has more priests and more parishes than all the other traditional priestly parishes combined. We must pray fervently that it will eventually obtain the recognition and blessing of Rome for its apostolate as this would be the greatest step forward yet taken for traditional Catholicism.

Those of us who fight for our Latin liturgical heritage may be termed reactionary, ignorant, or even schismatic, but in reality we are in the direct tradition of the Maccabees of the Old Testament. The commentary upon the Mass for the twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost in the St. Andrew Daily Missal states:

One of the most outstanding lessons which may be drawn from the books of Maccabees...is the reverence due to the things of God. What is generally called the rebellion of the Maccabees was in reality a magnificent example of fidelity to God, to his law, and to the covenants and promises that he had made to his people. These were threatened with oblivion and it was to uphold them that the Maccabees rebelled.

The Mass of St Pius V is the epitomization of the faith of our fathers, it is the liturgy celebrated in secret by the martyr priests of England and Wales, it is the liturgy that was celebrated at the Mass rocks of Ireland, it is the liturgy celebrated by the North American martyrs who died deaths that are too horrific to describe, it is the Mass described by the great English Oratorian, Father Frederick Faber, as “the most beautiful thing this side of heaven”, it is the Mass that Pope John Paul II has said should be celebrated for all who love it, and yet, *horribile dictu*, horrible to say, it is the one form of celebration which is not tolerated by the majority of the tolerant, dialoguing, ecumenically smiling English-speaking bishops today who certainly wish to consign it to oblivion. St Thomas Aquinas wrote that: “It is absurd and a

detestable shame, that we should suffer those traditions to be changed, which we have received from the fathers of old.”[29] Father Adrian Fortescue writes:

Our Mass goes back, without essential change, to the age when it first developed out of the oldest liturgy of all. It is still redolent of that liturgy, of the days when Caesar ruled the world and thought he could stamp out the faith of Christ, when our fathers met together before dawn and sang a hymn to Christ as to a God. The final result of our enquiry is that, in spite of unsolved problems, in spite of later changes there is not in Christendom another rite so venerable as ours.[30]

Caesar could not stamp out the faith of Christ and the Mass of our Fathers will never be stamped out by those bishops who have, to all intents and purposes, abandoned the faith of our Fathers in favour of what I have already quoted Father Kenneth Baker as describing as an "American Church" separate from Rome

During the centuries of Protestant persecution in England there was a saying among the pitifully small Catholic remnant: “It is the Mass that matters.” In 1549 the peasants of the West of England took up arms in defence of the Mass when Thomas Cranmer, the apostate Archbishop of Canterbury, imposed a new English Communion Service upon them. “We will have the Mass,” they insisted, and by the Mass they specified: “the Mass in Latin as it was before with the Sacrament over the High Altar, and there to be worshipped as it was wont to be.” Five thousand of them died when foreign mercenaries were brought in to crush the rebellion. “Valiantly and stoutly they stood to their tackle,” wrote a contemporary Protestant historian, “and they would not give over as long as life and limb lasted, and yet in the end all were overthrown and few or none left alive.” The Mass truly mattered to them, they loved it more than life itself. If the Mass matters to us, as much as it did to these humble and heroic Catholics, there should be no sacrifice that we are not prepared to make to hand it down to future generations just as we have received it. I will make just one suggestion in this respect, and that is that we should all make at least one sacrificial offering, an offering really hurts, to the completion of the seminary of the Fraternity of St Peter. Do not let the disloyal behaviour of a very small minority of priests within the Fraternity induce you to abandon it. This is precisely what the enemies of Tradition hope will happen. Please ensure that this seminary is completed. Its importance for the entire English-speaking world cannot be exaggerated.

Before concluding I will pass on some encouraging words from Cardinal Castrillon Hoyos, the new President of the Ecclesia Dei Commission. Under the presidency of Cardinal Mayer the Commission intervened actively on behalf of Catholics wishing to have the traditional Mass made available to them. Under his two successors, Cardinals Innocenti and Felice the Commission could be said to have engaged in a process of organised inactivity. During a meeting of almost two hours with the Cardinal on 4th September, he assured an Una Voce delegation that this will no longer be the case. He considered the Missal of St Pius V to be a great treasure of the Church, and said that it attracted young people not primarily for the use of the Latin language but for the sense of mystery that it imparts. He assured us that he would contact bishops who declined to permit Mass according to the 1962 Missal, and that he could see no reason why we should not be granted the use of all the liturgical books in use in 1962. It was his opinion that the Motu Proprio “Ecclesia Dei” put a serious responsibility upon bishops to implement it, and that only when there are serious reasons to the contrary should requests be denied.

I cannot imagine any valid reason for prohibiting the use of the pre-Vatican II liturgical books. I am certain that the good of the Church in the coming millennium requires that all restrictions on their use must be removed. Cardinal Ratzinger certainly believes that this should be the case. He writes:

I am of the opinion, to be sure, that the old rite should be granted much more generously to all those who desire it. It is impossible to see what could be dangerous or unacceptable about that. A community is calling its very being into question when it suddenly declares that what until now has been its holiest and highest possession is strictly forbidden, and when it makes the longing for it seem downright indecent. Can it be trusted any more about anything else? Won't it proscribe again tomorrow what it prescribes today? [31]

This is also the opinion of Monsignor Klaus Gamber, an opinion with which I certainly concur and with which I will conclude:

In the final analysis, this means that in the future the traditional rite of Mass must be retained in the Roman Catholic Church ... as the primary liturgical form for the celebration of Mass. It must become once more the norm of our faith and the symbol of Catholic unity throughout the world, a rock of stability in a period of upheaval and never-ending change. [32]

Notes

[1] L Bouyer, *The Decomposition of Catholicism* (Chicago, 1970), p. 1.

[2] i.e. 25%.

[3] The most recent assessment has been provided by Kenneth Jones in the Winter 2000 issue of *The Latin Mass*.

[4] *The Times Literary Supplement*, 22 December 1972.

[5] *Le Spectacle du Monde*, January 2000.

[6] *Catholic Times*, 12 May 2000.

[7] *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. II, Sermon 22, “The Gospel, a Trust Committed to Us.”

[8] James Hitchcock, *The Recovery of the Sacred* [RS](New York, 1974), p. 70.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 132.

[10] *Ibid.* p. 59.

[11] *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, February 1979.

[12] *The Devastated Vineyard* (Chicago, 1973), p. 71.

[13] K. Gamber, *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy* (Roman Catholic Books, New York, 1993), p. xiii.

[14] Gamber, p. 9.

[15] *The Devastated Vineyard* (Chicago, 1973), p. 199

[16] Von Hildebrand, p. 135.

[17] Mark Searle, “The Notre Dame Study of Catholic Parish Life”, *Worship* 60 (1986), p. 319.

[18] J. Ratzinger, *La Mia Vita: Ricordi-1927-1997* (Torino, 1997), p. 113.

[19] *Summa Theologica*, Part III, Q. 83, Art. 1.

[20] A. Fortescue, *The Mass* (London, 1917), p. 173.

[21] Fortescue, p. 208.

[22] Cited in *The Tablet*, 28 November 1925.

- [23] The Cardinal Archbishop and Bishops of the province of Westminster, A Vindication of the Bull "Apostolicae Curae" (London, 1898), p. 42.
- [24] Epist. LXIII, n. 17 (PL, vol, IV, col. 388-9).
- [25] Gamber, p. 61.
- [26] A. Bugnini, The Reform of the Liturgy: 1948-1975 (Collegeville, Minnesota, 1990), p. 221.
- [27] J. Gelineau, Demain la Liturgie [DL](Paris, 1976), p. 10.
- [28] Ibid.
- [29] Summa Theologica, II, I, Q. 97, art. 2.
- [30] Fortescue, p. 213.
- [31] J. Ratzinger, Salt of the Earth (Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1997), pp 176-177.
- [32] Gamber, p. 114.