

The Construction Of The New Mass Part I

Some Funny Things Happened Near The Roman Forum

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The "Tradition of the Fathers"¹ is the interpretive key to understanding the reform of the Roman Liturgy following the Second Vatican Council. Past issues of The Latin Mass have featured many essays critiquing the liturgical conciliar "reforms." My purpose is to evaluate the reform in the light of particular principles laid down by Sacrosanctum Consilium of Vatican II and inter-preted by the Consilium² of Paul VI, which have purported to return our liturgy to the so-called "Golden Age" of the Fathers of the Church. In this brief discussion, I will attempt to investigate the application of the principles laid down by the Consilium, especially as they are expressed in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM).³

First, it is important to understand that liturgists today are guided by the same fundamental principle as the reformers of Vatican II: namely, that we must return to the ideal of an uninfected, pure, and ancient liturgy in use before the introduction of "corrupting" Gallic or "French" elements. Specifically, we are referring to a historical phenomenon that caused a change in the ceremonies of the Mass of Gregory the Great (sixth century). The Roman Mass books were being copied and rearranged in France around the year 750. These new arrangements and additions of the Gallic/French church have been demonized in all modern liturgical discussion. When contemporary liturgists speak of returning to the "Liturgy of the Fathers," they mean we must do everything possible to copy the original Roman model (c. 600) and eschew any influence from Gaul/France.⁴ Examples of "Gallic" elements in the liturgy include the many private prayers of the priest found in the Plan (Pius V) Missal of 1570.

This general principle that Franco-German/Gallican liturgical elements constitute "corruptions" is the litmus test used by the Consilium in deciding whether to keep or reject any particular liturgical text.⁵ But it is necessary to see the arbitrary manner in which this principle was applied. The first and perhaps most unknown example is the dropping of the Sign of the Cross at the beginning of Mass. The Novus Ordo Missae features the Sign of the Cross at the beginning of Mass when the celebrant prays:

"In the name of the Father, etc." In the original draft of the new Mass, this was not the case. Popular "authoritative" works such as Jungmann's *Missarum Sollemnia* were invoked by Consilium members to argue that the historical Mass texts indicate that the Sign of the Cross was introduced through Gallic-German influences. Jungmann dates its introduction into the Roman liturgy at about the fourteenth or fifteenth century.⁶ The assumption of the reforming liturgists was that this constituted a horrible late medieval accretion that must be severed from the Mass in conformity with their concept of a pristine Roman liturgy. In fact, they considered the Sign of the Cross (which began the prayers at the foot of the altar) to be among the worst of the accretions. Therefore, according to the Consilium's anti-Gallican principles, it was dropped from their initial draft of the new rite of Mass.⁷

Enter Pope Paul VI, who, up to this point, had offered nothing but praise for the work of the Consilium, in which he seemed to have placed a blind trust.⁸ He decided, however, that eliminating the Sign of the Cross from the Mass might seem excessive to many Catholics. Therefore, after receiving a memo to this effect from the Pope, the Consilium voted again on whether or not this prayer should be dropped. The vote of the *periti*⁹ was quite indecisive. By a vote of 17 to 13, the Sign of the Cross was reinstated in the developing new rite. This is the first example of a working principle of the Consilium being thwarted. The liturgical Sign of the Cross, a Gallican element considered to be a late medieval corruption, survived by only a narrow margin!

Lest one think this an isolated incident that does not reflect the general orientation of the Consilium, consider an even more interesting occurrence, regarding the *Oratione Fratrum* (Pray, Brethren) during the Offertory. The prayer, in its present form, can be placed only in the late ninth or early tenth century.¹⁰ It is undoubtedly Galilean, but interestingly enough has parallels in many of the oriental liturgies.¹¹ The *periti* had voted away this prayer, criticizing its "dated" theology because it made a distinction between the priest's and faithful's sacrifice. The only value the *periti* saw in the prayer was that it prompted a response from the congregation, thereby promoting their idea of "active participation."¹² However, some of the "experts" argued against retaining the *Oratione Fratrum* because it was difficult to translate and might actually impede the people's participation! When the vote of our experts was tallied, the *Oratione Fratrum* lost with 30 rejections, 12 in favour of the prayer, and three indicating they would vote "yea" only if it were modified. Paul VI decided the *Oratione Fratrum* would remain because of his personal devotion to this prayer, which he referred to as a "precious pearl."¹³

These two examples indicate the essentially arbitrary nature of the fundamental principle from which the Consilium worked. If the "purifying process" had not been the arbitrary whim of what amounted to a liturgical political party, and if it had truly been a widely accepted liturgical principle, the sign of the cross and the Orate Fratres would not have been reinstated through papal intervention. The influence of personal caprice is plainly evident in the formulation of the Mass of Paul VI.

It gets worse. What follows demonstrates that, with regard to the "reforms" that were finally introduced into the Novus Ordo, non-Roman elements were introduced into a very "Roman" part of the Mass. The following is an example of the destruction of a prayer that dated from the "Golden Age" of the Fathers. It involves the so-called prayer of embolism, or the conclusion to the Our Father, in the Pian Missal of 1570. The parallel text may be helpful.

The Pian Missal's embolism is almost a verbatim parallel with the one found in the so-called Gelasian sacramentary, which dates to about the seventh century. For the most part the prayers of this sacramentary are recognized by scholars as representing the authentic Roman tradition.¹⁴

The Missal of Paul VI deletes from this traditional embolism any reference to the traditional Roman saints and their intercession. Secondly, it adds the doxology, "For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours." Now a liturgist should be elated to have an original text preserved from the days of St. Gregory. This is the quintessence of the Roman liturgy. Why, then, was the text altered?

<p>Jesus 1570 Missal of Pius V Deliver us O Lord, we pray, from every evil, past, present, and to come, and at the intercession of the blessed and glorious ever-virgin Mary, Mother of God, of your blessed apostles Peter and Paul, of Andrew, and of all the saints, be pleased to give peace in our days, so that with the help of your compassion we may be ever free from sin and safe from all anxiety. Through Christ, your Son, etc.</p>	<p>1970 Missal of Paul VI Deliver us, O Lord, we pray, from every evil, and grant us peace in our days, so that we, aided in the work of your mercy, may be always free from sin and safe from every anxiety: awaiting the blessed hope and coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ... For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and ever and into the ages of ages.</p>
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The secretary of the Consilium offered a rather stunning reason for dropping the intercession of the Sts. Peter, Paul and Andrew from the embolism: "[I]t did not seem appropriate to repeat intercessions made a few moments ago in the Eucharistic Prayer."¹⁵ This statement implies the use of Eucharistic Prayer I, which mentions the apostles Peter and Paul. However, the author fails to mention in his October 1968 statement that the decree *Prece Eucharistica* (May 23, 1968) had, five months before, just promulgated the three newly invented Eucharistic Prayers. Thus either everyone had forgotten that the other Eucharistic Prayers omitted mention of Sts. Peter and Paul, or that the reason just given for changing the embolism was at best illogical.

Secondly, why was the phrase, "Deliver us ... from ...evil, past, present, and to come" eliminated? Cardinal Bea informed us that it was because the Consilium wanted to insert "for the coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ."¹⁶ The reference to "evil ... to come" would be flat and redundant in contrast to this new and uplifting form of *Maranatha*.¹⁷ Finally, why did we add, "For yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory"? This is an easy one. Any time the "Golden Age of the Fathers" or "simplification" cannot be invoked, there is always "ecumenism" at work, as well as the principle of "active participation."¹⁸ Ecumenically, the Protestant confessions and many Oriental liturgies use this phrase; with other Christians already using it, it was therefore easy to adopt. Conveniently, these two themes were used to justify performing the contradictory task (according to the Consilium's own principles) of dismantling an ancient prayer that was truly Roman.

Another alteration involved the change from saying the prayer in a whisper to reciting it aloud. The explanation must involve the tendency of Bugnini and the Consilium to make historical hypothesis into scientific fact. Bugnini claims that the silent recital of the embolism was a corruption owing to Gallican influence.¹⁹ Joseph Jungmann, a peritus on the Vatican II preparatory commission and a member of the Consilium,²⁰ frankly admits, however, that it could be a custom from the pre-Gallican seventh century.²¹ Finally, instead of reciting the embolism as would have been done in Rome in the sixth or seventh century if it had been said aloud,²² the periti decided that it should have musical accompaniment. Therefore, they decided to import the music for the Our Father and the embolism. The Our Father was given Mozarabic (Visigothic) music, while the Consilium tried to adopt Gallican chants from Lyon to have the embolism sung aloud!²³ In order to "restore" the Roman rite, the oriental-like Mozarabic and the corrupt Gallic sources were utilized to replace the likely pristine Roman usage.

The three examples in this discussion are musings on items of personal interest about which I have made mental notes during my years of study. I intend to write further concerning aspects of new texts and prayers of the Novus Ordo Missae that are either lacking in their original historical context after they were "restored," or are simply based on fictitious liturgiology.

A thorough reading of the primary and secondary documentation pertaining to the new Mass of Paul VI does not permit one to grasp its principles in any set order of importance. Despite this difficulty we see emphasis on active participation, adaptation to the modern mentality, ecumenical concerns, and a fickle fidelity to tradition. It would be presumptuous to generalize about the hierarchy of importance of these elements in the minds of the present reformers.

A final provocative thought might be appropriate. A dearth of original documentation frequently presents liturgical studies with great historical gaps and mysteries. Modern liturgists realize the impossibility of tracing precisely the development of the Latin rite, especially in the early centuries.²⁴ Consilium members proceeded dangerously and self-deceptively when they presumed that their biased reconstructions of what constitutes the authentic Roman tradition were more accurate than what had been preserved in the organically developed traditional liturgy of the West.

To Be Cont'd.

Notes

1. General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 2000, no. 9.
2. The Consilium was a special "study group" set up by Paul VI with the official task of reforming the liturgy according to the "letter and spirit" of Vatican II. See International Commission on English in the Liturgy, Documents on the Liturgy 1963-1979, Conciliar; Papal and Curial Texts (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press 1982), hereafter referred to as DOL.
3. Ibid., p. 203. The General Instruction is the authoritative document of the Holy See that explains the new Mass and its parts. It includes an explanation of the reasons for the reform in general.
4. Scientia Liturgica, Manuale di Liturgia, ed. Professori del Pontificio Istituto Liturgico S. Anselmo, 5 vol., Edizione Italiana (Piemme, Casale Monferrato, 1998), vol. 1, pp. 149-160. Available in English as the Handbook for Liturgical Studies, published by Pueblo. This is a compilation of scholarly essays of important modern Liturgists.
5. Annibale Bugnini, Reform of the Roman Liturgy 1948-7. trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1990) pp. 339-40. The author was the Consilium's Secretary.
6. Joseph Jungmann, The Mass of the Roman Rite. Its Origins and Development. 2 vols., trans. Francis A. Brunner (New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1951), vol. 1, p. 296. This work represents the thinking Consilium.
7. Bugnini, Reform of the Roman Liturgy, p. 175.
8. Ibid., pp. 155-56. Paul VI's unquestioning confidence in the Consilium is also demonstrated by his rhapsodic praise in the papal audience of April 19, 1967. See DOL, p. 86.
9. This was the official title of advisors at Vatican II and Consilium, who were called "experts."
10. Jungmann, Mass of the Roman Rite, p. 87.
11. Ibid., pp. 82-83.
12. Bugnini, Reform of the Roman Liturgy, p. 358.
13. Ibid.. pp. 180, 379.

14. Cyrille Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy: An Introduction to the Sources* (Washington, D.C.: The Pastoral Press, 1986), pp. 67-68. This book is very highly praised by Anscar Chupongco, an influential liturgist. The embolism appears in the manuscript, *Liber Sacramentorum Romanae Ecclesiae Ordinis Anni Circuli* (Codex Vat. Reg. Lat. 3161' Paris Bibl. Nat. 7193. 41/56). (*Sacramentarium Gregorianum*) *Rerum Ecclesiasticarum Documenta*, cura Pontificii Athenaei Sancti Anselmi de Urbe; Edita Moderante L.C. Mohlberg, Series vol. 4, Casa Editrice Herder, Roma 1960. Capitulum [XVII], # 1258.

15. Bugnini, *Reform of the Roman Liturgy*, p. 380.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 376.

17. This means that the new phrase is eschatological, and reminds us that Jesus will come again. It seems inappropriate, since the new Canon just mentioned "Christ has died ...Christ will come again." Even the Latin text has us mention the second coming immediately after the apex of the Consecration. A repetition here is redundant and detracts from the *Mysterium Fidei* of the Canon.

18. *Supra*, p. 41.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 339-40.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 337.

21. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, vol. 2, p. 289.

22. A. Turco, "II Canto Gregoriano," *Corso fondamentale*, Roma 1991. (Elaborazione: Ma Dolores Aguirre.)

23. Bugnini, *Reform of the Roman Liturgy*, p. 120.

24. Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, p. 37. Concerning the Roman liturgy of the first five centuries, this most prestigious liturgist remarks, "Undoubtedly there must have been considerable liturgical activity but we have no way of evaluating either its extent or its results."