

## What Happened at Vatican II? Renewing the Liturgy

St. Michael's Church, Waterloo, Saturday, November 5th.

9:00am Refreshments and Morning Prayer

9:30am Dr. Peter Erb on the background to Vatican II

10:20am Break

10:30am Seán O'Seasnáin on the historical development of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*

11:20am Break

11:30am Fr. Edward Henhoeffler on *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and the new Roman Missal

12:20am Closing Remarks

12:30pm Lunch (optional)

The readings package contains:

1) *What Happened at Vatican II* by John W. O'Malley

Chapter 4: The First Period (1962)

pp. 127-141

2) Handout by Seán O'Seasnáin

3) Excerpts from *Sacrosanctum Concilium*

4) *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal*

Introduction

Chapter 1: The Importance and Dignity of the Celebration of the Eucharist

Presented by the *Communio Circle of the Diocese of Hamilton*

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*What Happened at*  
VATICAN II



John W. O'Malley

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# 4

## The First Period (1962)

### *The Lines Are Drawn*

**A**FTER almost two weeks in session, debate finally opened on October 22. By that time bishops had become painfully aware of the problems attendant on a meeting of such size that invited the active participation of all those present. They were also aware of organizational and procedural problems peculiar to this council, two of which were outstanding. The first was the management of the agenda and the moderating of the General Congregations. The "Regulations" stipulated three players in this arena: the Council of Presidents, the Secretariat for Extraordinary Affairs, and the Secretary General, Felici. John XXIII named ten cardinals to the Council of Presidents, whose charge was to direct the council discussions. Of the ten only Tisserant, dean of the College of Cardinals, was from the Curia. They sat at a table just in front of the papal altar and took turns chairing the meetings. From the very beginning, this large and diverse group had difficulty expeditiously handling questions and problems that arose in the course of the sessions.

The Secretariat for Extraordinary Affairs, chaired by Cardinal Amleto Cicognani, secretary of state, was to help the presidents resolve procedural conflicts and function more efficiently. Composed of seven cardinals besides Cicognani, the Secretariat was broadly representative of different viewpoints and hence potentially helpful in finding a middle way amid conflicting pressures. It met outside the sessions of the council, however,

and could not act immediately as problems arose from the floor. Cicognani had succeeded Tardini as secretary of state after Tardini's death. By virtue of his office as secretary of state (but not as chair of the council's Secretariat), Cicognani had regular access to the pope and thus could keep the council informed of his views, even though such a function was outside the purview of the "Regulations." Just where the responsibilities of the Secretariat for Extraordinary Affairs ended and those of the presidents began was murky. Into this breach often stepped the secretary general, Felici. His on-the-spot authority in coordinating the day-to-day tasks essential to the council's smooth running, such as the printing and distribution of the documents, was inadvertently enhanced by those blurred lines.<sup>1</sup>

The second problem was the sheer quantity of printed material the bishops were expected to read and digest. They felt inundated. Before arriving in Rome they had received seven schemas, just the beginning of what promised to be a tidal wave. The Preparatory Commissions had produced roughly seventy documents. Although some of these documents were chapters intended for larger texts, they created a first impression of indigestible volume. As the council found its way, most of these documents were put aside or, more generally, incorporated into other schemas. Before that happened, however, the bishops anticipated drowning in them.

The bishops, moreover, had to read the materials they did receive, make decisions about them, and try to keep everything straight in their heads. These documents seemed to be a scattershot collection of materials guided by no discernible orientation except that many aimed at confirming and promoting directions set by the popes of the previous 150 years and at validating theological positions the bishops had learned decades earlier from their seminary textbooks.

Among the seven schemas the bishops received in the fall of 1962, two—On the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*) and On the Sources of Revelation (*De Fontibus Revelationis*)—turned out to be of the utmost importance. Since the schema on the liturgy was by general consensus assessed as well prepared and had excited less negative commentary beforehand than some of the others, it appeared first on the agenda. Many bishops were wary of liturgical changes, and some harbored suspicions about the orthodoxy of liturgical experts. All of them, however, had experienced some changes and knew that the popes, beginning with the recently canonized (1954) Pius X, had sanctioned and promoted them. In

principle, therefore, they could not be altogether opposed to the idea. Just how they would react to the draft was, however, not clear.

### The Discussion of the Liturgy

Cardinal Gaetano Cicognani, prefect of the Congregation of Rites and elder brother of the secretary of state, chaired the Preparatory Commission on the liturgy. Annibale Bugnini, a priest who taught at both the Lateran and Urbana universities in Rome, served as its secretary, a position of considerable importance. Bugnini was a skilled and respected liturgist who had guided Pius XII in his liturgical changes. He was able to coordinate the efforts of the sixty-five members and consultants who made up the commission to produce, by January 1962, a coherent text that combined a concise statement of principles with concrete recommendations for action. Cicognani, gravely ill at the time and also unsympathetic to aspects of the document, hesitated to sign it. Felici, fearful that Cicognani would die without signing, appealed to Pope John, who appealed to Amleto, who on February 1, 1962, persuaded his still-reluctant brother to affix his signature to the text. *Sacrosanctum* was ready for the council.<sup>2</sup>

Three weeks later, on February 22, the pope appointed Cardinal Larraona as the new prefect of the Congregation of Rites and therefore as head of the Preparatory Commission. As such, he was the successor to Cicognani, who had since died. Larraona aligned himself with some of the most conservative members of the council and became a leader among them.<sup>3</sup> On that same February 22, the Vatican published *Veterum Sapientia*, the Apostolic Constitution that insisted on the intensification of study of Latin in seminaries. As noted, this text might be taken as indirectly confirming the place of Latin in the liturgy.<sup>4</sup> John XXIII not only signed the document but, in an address that day in St. Peter's, singled it out for praise.<sup>5</sup> Where did the pope himself stand on liturgical issues? It was anybody's guess.

As was expected for the head of a Preparatory Commission, Larraona became president of the Liturgical Commission of the council itself. He proved a poor chairman, at least in part because he deliberately tried to obstruct action on a text that displeased him. On October 21, at the first meeting of the commission, moreover, he passed over Bugnini as secretary and replaced him with Ferdinando Antonelli, a priest working in

the Curia at the Congregation of Rites. Larraona considered Bugnini too progressive and held him responsible for the disagreeable schema he inherited.

The appointment of Antonelli was all the more surprising because he had played no role in the preparation of the document. Ottaviani, it was rumored, had a hand in his selection. In all the other commissions the secretaries, like the presidents, were retained from the pre-council commissions. Not only was Bugnini not named secretary; he was also almost immediately dismissed from his post as a teacher of liturgy at the Lateran University.<sup>6</sup> Word spread fast. Many at the council construed the incidents as further evidence of machinations by "the Curia" to control the council at any cost, by any means. Ultimately, perhaps to the consternation of those who promoted him, Antonelli turned out to be an evenhanded reporter of what Bugnini bequeathed him.

On October 22, the day after Bugnini's dismissal, Larraona took the floor in St. Peter's to say not much more than that *Sacrosanctum Concilium* would be introduced by Antonelli, who spoke for about twenty minutes. Antonelli began by making two general points.<sup>7</sup> First, just as the Council of Trent and Vatican I had mandated revision and emendation of liturgical texts, experts were now unanimously convinced that, while holding fast to the liturgical tradition of the church, similar changes in texts and rites were needed "to accommodate them to the ethos and needs of our day." The *aggiornamento* theme was clear.

Second, a great pastoral problem had to be addressed. The faithful had become "mute spectators" at Mass instead of active participants in the liturgical action. This development, he said, dated back to the Middle Ages, and recent popes, beginning with Pius X, had taken steps to remedy it. To deal with these issues, Pius XII had established a commission in 1948 that produced a full volume of reflections and recommendations. In 1951 Pius, acting on the recommendations, had restored the Easter Vigil and, in 1955, the liturgy for the entire Sacred Triduum, the last three days of Holy Week. Antonelli, by convincingly arguing that *Sacrosanctum Concilium* was in keeping with recent papal teaching and actions, was able to forestall a problem that would dog other schemas at the council.

He listed five criteria that had guided the Preparatory Commission in drawing up the schema. First, the commission would exercise great care in conserving the liturgical patrimony of the church. Second, it would be guided by a few principles that would undergird a general renewal (*instauratio*)

*ratio*) of the liturgy. Third, it would derive its practical and rubrical directives from a doctrinal base. Fourth, it would insist on the necessity of instilling in the clergy a deeper sense of "the liturgical spirit" so that they could be effective teachers of the faithful. Finally, it would take as its aim leading the faithful into an ever more active participation in the liturgy. The document in hand, he reminded his audience, had been approved by the Central Preparatory Commission and was thus ready for examination by the council fathers.

Antonelli went on to present the eight chapters of the text, which covered every aspect of liturgical celebration: (1) General Principles; (2) the Eucharistic Mystery (the Mass); (3) Sacraments and Sacramentals; (4) the Divine Office (the liturgical hours like Vespers); (5) the Liturgical Year; (6) Liturgical Furnishings; (7) Sacred Music; and (8) Sacred Art. In presenting them he underscored how the five criteria were operative throughout the text. He made no mention of what had been a burning issue in the commission and would be the most time-consuming aspect of the discussion in St. Peter's, the use of vernacular languages in the Mass.

The text about which he spoke had 105 sections, running without the notes to about 25 pages of ordinary print. The notes to the text covered a wide variety of sources but with a generous sprinkling from the encyclical *Mediator Dei*. The "Preface" stated that the purpose of the council was to foster a more vigorous Christian life among the faithful, to promote union with the "separated brethren" (*fratres separati*), and to call all into the church. Therefore, the council would make changes in those things subject to change, so as, in this case, to adapt the liturgy better to the conditions of modern life and to foster Christian unity—two themes from John's opening address, *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*. It made the important point that the Eucharistic Liturgy was where the "work of our redemption" especially took place and that it manifested the many aspects of the "mystery of Christ and the authentic nature of the true church." Thus Antonelli made the crucial connection between liturgy and ecclesiology.

In chapter one the "mystery of Christ" was specified as "the Paschal Mystery," the mystery that began with Christ's passion but went on to his resurrection and glorification. With the Paschal Mystery expressed in this full way as one of its themes, the text subtly shifted a mind-set among Catholics that since the Middle Ages had located the Redemption almost exclusively in Christ's suffering and death. The text thereby implicitly promoted a shift in style of spirituality. It once again stated perhaps the obvi-

ous by insisting on the liturgy as nourishment for one's spiritual life. In so doing, however, it affirmed right at the beginning of the council what would become one of its great themes, the call to holiness that God, through the church, addresses to all men and women.

Chapter one was especially important for its insistence on active participation by everyone in the congregation. Such participation was the right and duty of every Christian. It was demanded by the very nature of the liturgy and was conferred upon the faithful by virtue of their baptism. This principle was the most fundamental in the whole schema. It was a counterpoint to the long historical development that bit by bit had located all the action in the priest-celebrant.

The chapter was also important for enunciating other principles. What-ever obscured or distracted from the essential meaning of the liturgical celebrations was to be eliminated. Intelligibility and simplicity were thus to be norms in whatever changes were implemented. Christ was present in the Word of Scripture as well as in the Eucharist, and therefore the significance of that part of the liturgy—the "Liturgy of the Word"—was to be made more effective. This highlighting of "the Word" in *Sacrosanctum* presaged a new centrality of Scripture in Catholic preaching and piety, which would become another major theme of the council. While the essential structure of the Roman Rite was to be maintained, local adaptation, especially in mission territories, was legitimate and encouraged. Greater autonomy was to be granted to bishops in making adaptations appropriate to their cultures, which was a clear call for some decentralization.

About liturgical languages, the chapter said:

Latin is to be retained in the liturgies of the Western church. Since, however, "in some rites it is clear that the vernacular has proved very useful for the people" [a quotation from *Mediator Dei*], it should be given a wider role in liturgy, especially in readings, announcements, certain prayers, and music. Let it be left to episcopal conferences in different parts of the world, in consultation if need be with bishops of nearby regions speaking the same language, to propose to the Holy See the degree and the modes for admitting vernacular languages into the liturgy.<sup>8</sup>

Whereas the first chapter consisted in principles, only the most important of which I have mentioned here, the others consisted almost entirely

in concrete applications or directives. For instance chapter two, on the Eucharist, became specific about the vernacular: "In Mass let a suitable place be made for the vernacular, especially in the readings, in prayers, and in some canticles, in accordance with article 24 of this Constitution." Somewhat ironically, this provision was more conservative than the corresponding directive of the Council of Trent, which had stated simply that "it is wrong to maintain that the mass must everywhere be celebrated in the vernacular."<sup>9</sup> Trent left the question open, but in the violent atmosphere of the day, no change was possible. Vernacular had already come to stand for Protestant.

The next article called for reception of the Eucharist by the faithful on certain occasions under the form of both bread and wine, a change in the medieval tradition of reserving wine for the priest. Trent, again, had left this issue open, but the earlier tradition had been reaffirmed by sixteenth-century popes in the face of the Protestant practice of sharing the cup.<sup>10</sup> Sometimes the directives were generic in the extreme. In chapter three, the schema had only the following to say about the Sacrament of Penance: "Let the rite and formula of the Sacrament of Penance be revised so as more clearly to express the effect of the Sacrament." No matter how generic some of its provisions, the document also laid down a number of specific measures to be adopted in the reform of the liturgy. Despite these prescriptions, the text in some passages pointed in the direction of the non-judicial, Scripture-based, patristic-inspired style the council would eventually adopt as its own. It contained no canons or anathemas.

In his presentation, Antonelli quite properly did not go into detail. When he finished, the president for the day opened the floor for discussion. How would the document be received? The first six speakers that day included some who would turn out to be among the most influential in the whole council. Cardinal Frings of Cologne led off from the presidents' table. His opening words: "The schema before us is like the last will and testament of Pius XII, who, following in the footsteps of Saint Pius X, boldly began a renewal of the sacred liturgy."<sup>11</sup> Frings thus sounded what would become a leitmotif of the majority: the council was carrying forward work that had already begun. His next sentence was equally significant: "The schema is to be commended for its modest and truly pastoral literary style, full of the spirit of Holy Scripture and the Fathers of the Church." He then made four brief suggestions, three of which pertained

to use of the vernacular. Within ten minutes of beginning and letting it be known how highly he thought of the draft document, he sat down.

Ruffini spoke next, even more briefly and also from the presidents' table. He criticized the text for being too exclusively focused on the Roman Rite, reminded the fathers that only the Congregation of Rites had authority in matters liturgical, and, more significant, expressed no praise for the document. Then came Lercaro of Bologna. Clear in his approval for the text and insistent on how much it accorded with the tradition of the church, he tried to refute one of the standard criticisms leveled at liturgical reformers: "The changes the document mandates do not grow out of some sterile archeology or out of some insane itching for novelty but out of the requests of pastors and out of pastoral needs—active participation in the liturgy is, according to the memorable words of Pius X, the first and irreplaceable source of the Christian spirit." He concluded: "When taken as a whole and with due allowance for appropriate emendation, I willingly and eagerly in the Lord give my approval to the document."<sup>12</sup>

Then Montini. In substance he approved the text, especially because it rested on the principle of pastoral efficacy. The schema conceded nothing to those who arbitrarily wanted to make changes nor to those who insisted that the rite can in no way be changed, as if the historical form were inseparable from what it signified. Montini called for greater use of the vernacular, but with qualification.<sup>13</sup>

Then came Spellman of New York with one of the longer interventions, in which he managed never to say outright that he liked what he had read. His message was simple: caution. In particular, though the vernacular might be fine in the administration of some of the sacraments, it should not be introduced into the Mass. Later in the course of the debate he was seconded in this opinion by Cardinal McIntyre of Los Angeles: "The sacred Mass should remain as it is."<sup>14</sup> Spellman had meanwhile taken a swipe at professional liturgists by reminding the council fathers that as far as the liturgy was concerned, the perspective of real pastors was often different from that of liturgical scholars.<sup>15</sup>

Döpfner of Munich stated immediately his wholehearted approval of the schema. He registered his disagreement with those who felt that the document should stick to general principles and not descend, as it did in some matters, to specific measures. He probably made this point because he feared what would happen in the Congregation of Rites if the provi-



His Beatitude Maximos IV Saigh. Photograph courtesy of the Melkite Catholic Patriarchate.

sions were left too vague. Then, seemingly in direct response to Spellman, he voiced his support for use of the vernacular even in the Mass.

Meanwhile, outside the precincts of St. Peter's, bishops from the "new churches" began holding press conferences about the liturgy. Bishop Willem van Bekkum of Ruteng, Indonesia, held the first on October 23, followed within a few days by another by Archbishop Eugene D'Souza of Nagpur, India, and then another by Lawrence Nagae of Urawa, Japan.

They all insisted on the urgency in their countries of cultural adaptation, including use of the vernacular. These conferences attracted considerable attention in the media and thus had at least as much impact on the other bishops as if they had been delivered on the council floor.<sup>16</sup>

Back in St. Peter's on October 24, the day after van Bekkum's conference, Maximos IV rose to speak and shook the bishops to attention right off by addressing them in French. His voice was strong, his tone assured. Here was a speaker, the council fathers immediately recognized, with a quite different perspective, a speaker representing a venerable tradition that had not been subject to many of the historical developments that so much conditioned the traditions of the western church.

Maximos praised the document but said he would confine his remarks only to section 24, concerning Latin:

The almost absolute value assigned to Latin in the liturgy, in teaching, and in the administration of the Latin church strikes us from the Eastern church as strange [*assez anormal*]. Christ after all spoke the language of his contemporaries. . . . [In the East] there has never been a problem about the proper liturgical language. All languages are liturgical, as the Psalmist says, "Praise the Lord, all ye people." . . . The Latin language is dead. But the church is living, and its language, the vehicle of the grace of the Holy Spirit, must also be living because it is intended for us human beings not for angels.

He had two suggestions. First, instead of saying that Latin was to be kept as the language for the liturgy, the text should be emended to say simply that it is "the original and official language of the Roman Rite." Second, instead of saying that the episcopal conferences "propose" to the Holy See whatever use of the vernacular they think appropriate, the text should say that the conferences "decide," subject to the approval of the Holy See.<sup>17</sup> When the session ended, a number of bishops rushed up to Maximos to congratulate him and shake his hand. That very day, Pope John noted in his diary that the Latin issue divided the council into those who had never left their own country "or Italy" and those especially from mission territories.<sup>18</sup>

But Maximos was far from being the last bishop to address *Sacrosanctum*. Discussion of the schema dragged on from October 22 to November 13—three weeks, fifteen sessions, with 328 interventions from the floor and

297 submitted in written form. Although speakers were held to a ten-minute limit, the "Regulations" failed to provide a procedure for closing debate on a topic. Bishops began to fear that the discussion on the liturgy would go on forever. Speaker after speaker repeated the same points. On November 6 Pope John intervened, making an ad hoc change in the "Regulations" to allow the presidents to close discussion if they felt an issue had been adequately addressed. Timely closure was now legal, an important step in moving the agenda along more quickly.

Where did the schema stand when, on November 13, the presidents successfully called for a vote to halt the interventions? It obviously had strong support, perhaps most notably from African and Asian bishops, but it had also received much criticism. Two issues attracted the most attention and generated the most heat. The first was the vernacular. Eighty-one interventions focused on that issue. The second revolved around the competence of local bishops or episcopal conferences to make decisions, and thus concerned the limits of the authority of the Congregation of Rites. Early on, therefore, the crucial issue of center-periphery bounded to the surface. It was well known, moreover, that in the Central Preparatory Commission, when the council was still being planned, resolutions to abolish the Holy Office outright had come to the floor—but had gotten nowhere.

Ottaviani had already come to stand for "the Curia" and to embody everything people disliked about the Holy Office, which was being increasingly criticized. This perception of him was not confined to members of the council. Even for those who followed the council from afar, Ottaviani became almost a household name. Jokes about him circulated broadly and began to appear in newspapers and journals. One morning, supposedly, Ottaviani called a taxi and directed the driver to take him to the council. The driver hit the road for Trent.

As early as October 24 Archbishop Pietro Parente, the assessor (administrative director) of the Holy Office, complained in an angry intervention about criticisms of his Congregation: "We in the Holy Office are martyrs, a thing or two from the caution with which the Holy See operated and not rush into changes. Although *novatores* could have a less nocuous meaning, in ecclesiastical parlance it was a synonym for heretic, as everybody at the council knew full well."<sup>19</sup>

A few days earlier Ottaviani had criticized *Sacrosanctum* for its literary style. The language was often ambiguous, he said, even in the doctrinal



parts. Those parts, furthermore, "invaded" the doctrinal camp and hence needed to be reviewed by theologians, by which he meant his own Doctrinal Commission.<sup>20</sup> His patience was wearing thin. He took the floor again on October 30, opening his intervention with a series of rhetorical questions that made clear how utterly unacceptable he found the schema. Among the questions: "What, now, are we dealing here with a revolution regarding the whole Mass?"<sup>21</sup>

He insisted that the Mass not be changed and that reception of the Eucharist under both forms was a bad idea, as was concelebration, that is, more than one priest officiating at a single Mass. He then hit his adversaries at their most vulnerable point. It was all well and good to quote popes like Pius XII when they agreed with one's position, but what about quoting them when they did not? In 1956, he reminded the council, Pius XII had made it clear to liturgists who had just completed an important meeting at Assisi that Latin was and would remain the language of the Mass.<sup>22</sup>

He was well over the ten-minute limit. Cardinal Alfrink, presiding that day, interrupted the powerful head of the Holy Office to inform him that he had already spoken for the maximum amount of time. This was treatment to which Ottaviani was not accustomed: "I've finished! I've finished! I've finished!" The basilica broke into applause. Ottaviani, insulted and humiliated, boycotted the council for the next two weeks, a dramatic and extraordinarily meaningful gesture from somebody of his stature.

Finally, on November 14 Cardinal Tisserant, the presiding president of the day, put *Sacrosanctum Concilium* to a vote on whether to accept the schema as the base text. Because so many interventions on the document had been critical, this vote, the council's first on a schema, was awaited with considerable tension. A positive vote meant that the document was fundamentally sound, so that after revisions by the Liturgical Commission, it could later in the council be resubmitted for approval of the changes and then for final approval. It also implicitly meant that it need not be submitted to the Doctrinal Commission, as Ottaviani had asked, to have its orthodoxy ensured. The outcome of the voting astounded everybody—a landslide in favor, 2,162 votes, with only 46 opposed. That was a 97 percent approval.

The next year, on December 4, 1963, the council overwhelmingly gave its approval to the revised text of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, and Paul VI then promulgated it. The final vote was even more of a landslide: 2,147 in

favor, 4 against. This was the first document approved by the council and, compared with others, was remarkable for how little it had changed from the original version. Regarding Latin, for instance, the text, though softened slightly, remained substantially the same.<sup>23</sup> Regarding the other hotly debated issue, however, the text in three places affirmed the authority of bishops and bishops' conferences to make decisions in adapting the liturgy to local circumstances. This action effectively nullified Canon 1257 of the Code, which placed all decisions about liturgy exclusively in the Holy See.

By approving *Sacrosanctum*, the council set in motion a programmatic reshaping of virtually every aspect of Roman Catholic liturgy unlike anything that had ever been attempted before. The changes mandated by the Council of Trent, for instance, consisted basically in standardizing traditional texts and paring away some accretions. Worshipers would hardly have recognized the difference. Not true with Vatican II.

The institution that was to guide the reshaping was created almost immediately after *Sacrosanctum* was promulgated. On the morning of January 3, 1964, Cardinal Cicognani summoned Father Bugnini to his office to tell him that Pope Paul VI had created a commission to implement and interpret *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and had named him secretary. The appointment of Bugnini to this crucial post was another example of the remarkable rehabilitations that took place during the council. Moreover, though Cardinal Larraona, still prefect of the Congregation of Rites, was named to the commission, Cardinal Lercaro was to be its president. When the question arose as to where the Consilium, as this body became known, was to meet, Cardinal Cicognani replied tersely, "Wherever you wish, but not at the Congregation of Rites."<sup>24</sup>

The Consilium set about its task. The Mass began to look different. The priest, instead of celebrating Mass with his back to the congregation, from which he was separated by a railing around the sanctuary, now faced the pews. This change signified that the ceremony was an act of worship of a gathered community as well as a sacrifice to God performed in the congregation's name. During the first part of the Mass, the Liturgy of the Word, the celebrant no longer stood at the altar with his back to the people. He now stood in the pulpit facing them, or, if someone else read the Scripture passages, he sat at the side of the altar.

Right after the council Latin was retained in the central Eucharistic

prayer, the so-called canon of the Mass, a measure in keeping with *Sacrosanctum*, but within a few years the Mass in its entirety was being celebrated in the vernacular worldwide. It had become increasingly obvious that the principles of intelligibility and active participation did not sit well with maintaining for such a meaningful part a language only priests understood. The decree thus contained within itself a dynamism that led to changes that were beyond some of its specific provisions but that were almost required by its most fundamental principles.

These were only two of the changes implemented through a series of decrees from 1964 until 1973.<sup>25</sup> Were they revolutionary, as Cardinal Ottaviani feared? The answer depends in part on one's definition of revolution, but there can be no doubt that the changes were obvious to even the most casual observer and so considerable that a few Catholics repudiated them as heresy and betrayal.<sup>26</sup> To worship in the vernacular was to worship like Protestants, a complaint heard especially in English-speaking countries. The vast majority of Catholics accepted the changes—enthusiastically, reluctantly, or somewhere in between, but with full awareness that the Mass, while surely maintaining its basic elements and structure, was to the naked eye and ear different from what it had been before.

Within the council itself the vote that originally approved *Sacrosanctum*, on November 14, 1962, had a significance beyond liturgy and worship. It enunciated and gave first voice to at least four principles that would be adopted and developed by other documents and help give Vatican II its final profile. The first is the principle of *aggiornamento*, or adaptation to contemporary circumstances. In fact, however, the provisions and great themes of the text are as much due to the principle of *ressourcement* as to that of *aggiornamento*. The liturgists, that is to say, had returned to the ancient sources in order to find their way. The Mass was thus not so much “modernized” as made to conform more closely to fundamental and traditional principles.

The second is the principle of adaptation to local circumstances: “The church does not wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters that do not involve the faith or the good of the whole community.” Unity, the document implies, can be maintained within diversity. In stating that “the art of our own times and of every nation and culture shall be given free scope,” the council took a step out of its European box.

The third is the principle of episcopal authority and of greater decision-

making on the local level. The document is thus consonant with the doctrine of episcopal collegiality. The final principle is the full and active participation of everybody present in the liturgical action. This is a principle of engagement and active responsibility, and by implication it extended beyond liturgy to the church at large, to the church as “the people of God.” Liturgy, that is to say, had ecclesiological implications and ramifications.

Was the vote on November 14 a victory for those whom the media were beginning to call “the progressives”? The vote was so close to unanimity that it seemed to be a victory for everybody. Even so, it was by now clear that there were two orientations among the council fathers that seemed destined to clash. Would they? If so, when and over what?

### The Turning Point: The Sources of Revelation

On the same day as the vote, Cardinal Ottaviani, absent for two weeks, took the floor to introduce the schema On the Sources of Revelation, prepared by his commission.<sup>27</sup> This document was essentially about the roles in the church of Scripture, Tradition, and “Magisterium” (ecclesiastical, especially papal, teaching authority) and of their relationship to one another. As such, it might seem to be a subject too technical to ignite a conflagration. It became invested, however, with a symbolic importance that was immense. A month had elapsed since the opening of the council, and now the decisive moment for the direction it would take had arrived. As the American Protestant observer Douglas Horton put it in his diary for November 14, “The dam broke.”<sup>28</sup>

Ottaviani spoke for only five minutes, less as presenting a text for consideration than as defending it even before discussion began. He was aware, he said, that alternative schemas were circulating, which was contrary to Canon 222 of the Code of Canon Law. Discussion was to take place on this text, no other. The previous day he had informed his commission that since the documents prepared by the Preparatory Commissions had been approved by the pope, they could not be rejected by the council.<sup>29</sup>

Complaints were circulating, he said, that the schema took no account of the new theology, but councils spoke for the ages, not for a particular theological school that tomorrow is forgotten. Remember, moreover, that the commission consisted of bishops and experts from around the

**Chapter 4 - The First Period (1962)**  
***The Lines Are Drawn***  
**(What Happened at Vatican II - John W. O'Malley)**

A summary/background of that part of Chapter 4 of WH@VatII  
on the development of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*

Suggested Title:

**Becoming familiar with the sacred:  
How to grok *Sacrosanctum Concilium* while avoiding moonbats and wingnuts  
- from the vantage point of a young Irish friar in formation at that time**

On Saturday, November 5th at St. Michael's Parish, Waterloo I will attempt to present a summary/background of that part of Chapter 4 of WH@VatII on the development of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* from the perspective of a student friar in formation during those years (1959-1967) at St. Mary's Priory Dominican House of Studies (now The Priory Institute) in Ireland - while keeping in mind Guy Fawkes' fate on this same date in 1605!!

I have to thank Robert Heinlein and Answers.com for this title as it was through 'Today's Highlights' from Answers.com for July 7 this year that I learned the meaning of the terms "grok", "moonbats" and "wingnuts". Utilizing this jargon i.e. words which were coined by this science fiction writer in 'Stranger in a Strange Land' and in his other writings (coincidentally he wrote around the same time that Vatican II was in progress) I hope to demonstrate that a familiar, if not intimate, understanding (GROK = transitive verb: "to understand profoundly and intuitively" ala Merriam-Webster) of what really happened at Vatican II regarding the Liturgy can help avoid extremes, excesses and distortions in interpretation and celebration.

I feel very much like a 'grok' when it comes to Vatican II. That is to say I was so fully and deeply engaged with the happenings of Vatican II during those years which coincided with my formation in theology as a member of an international religious order (some of whom were *periti* - one a Cardinal participant) that it has become an integral part of my thinking. I might even presume to say that it is part of my spiritual DNA. Some self-appointed critics and commentators on liturgical reform since Vatican II have morphed into wingnuts and moonbats and seem to be in the business of alienation rather than adoration - truly strangers in a strange land! (According to Answers.com "a moonbat, which was first used as such in Heinlein's short story 'Space Jockey', is a derogatory term referring to a liberal or a progressive political thinker. It is the counterpart of a wingnut, which is generally used to insult a person on the right side of the political spectrum").

On hearing or reading some of these critics/commentators on liturgical reform one cannot help detect their vitriol and animosity toward anyone who does not agree with them. These spokespeople are often devoid of rationality and of virtue as they enforce their extreme viewpoints. What is needed is a *via media*. Vatican II's *Sacrosanctum Concilium* provided that middle way. I hope to explore "how the lines were drawn" in the words of John W. O'Malley in Ch. 4 while providing a close-up background of my personal encounter with the Council.

- Seán O'Seasáin

August 11, 2011



## Dominican Frater Gerardus and Vatican Council Two Timeline

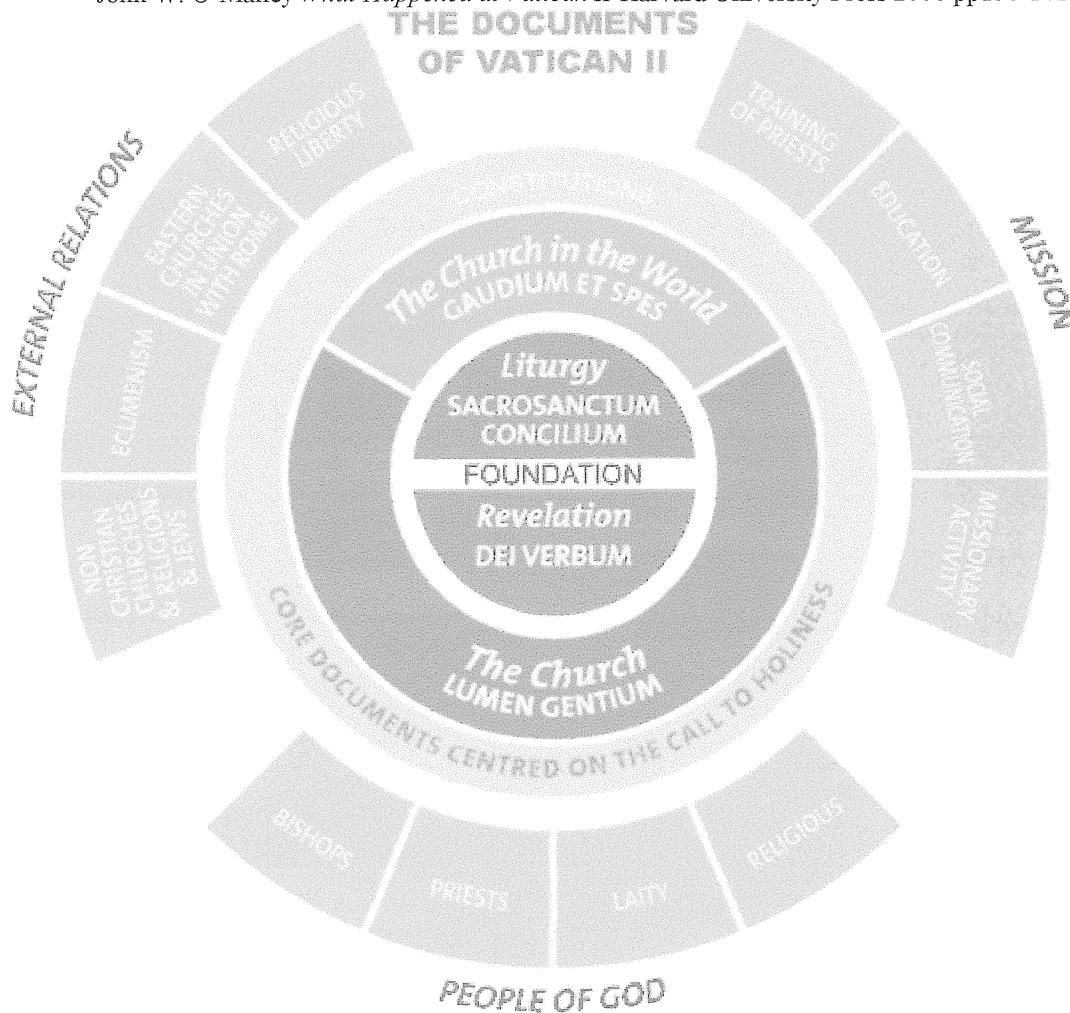
Year	Month	What happened . . .
1959	Jan 25	Solemn Announcement <i>Questa festiva</i> of Ecumenical Council Pope John XXIII
	Oct 14	Frater Gerardus enters Dominican novitiate at St. Mary's Priory, Cork
1960	June 5	Motu Proprio <i>Superno Dei</i> establishing Preparatory Commissions for Vatican II
	Oct 15	Frater Gerardus makes temporary vows and starts <b>first year Philosophy</b>
1961	May 15	Encyclical <i>Mater et Magistra</i> on Christianity and Social Progress
	Summer	Frater Gerardus goes from Cork to Dominican House of Studies Tallaght Dublin
	Sept 15	Frater Gerardus begins <b>second year Philosophy</b>
	Dec 25	Apostolic Constitution <i>Humanae Salutis</i> convocating the Vatican Council
	Sept 15	Frater Gerardus begins <b>third year Philosophy</b>
	Oct 11	Declaration <i>Gaudet Mater Ecclesia</i> for the opening of Second Vatican Council
1963	Apr 11	Encyclical <i>Pacem in Terris</i> "Peace on Earth" John XXIII
	June 3	John XXIII dies – Paul VI elected June 21
	Sept 15	Frater Gerardus begins <b>first year Theology</b>
	Oct 15	Frater Gerardus takes solemn vows
	Oct 17	International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) formed
	Dec 4	<b>Constitution <i>Sacrosanctum concilium</i> "On the Sacred Liturgy"</b>
	Dec 4	Decree <i>Inter Mirifica</i> "On the Instruments of Social Communication"
1964	Jan 25	Apostolic Letter <i>Sacram Liturgiam</i> Motu Proprio
	Apr	ICEL formally established
	Aug 6	Encyclical <i>Ecclesiam Suam</i> "On the Church"
	Sept 15	Frater Gerardus begins <b>second year Theology</b>
	Sept 26	First Instruction <i>Inter Oecumenici</i> "on the Orderly Implementation of the Constitution on the Liturgy"
	Nov 21	Constitution <i>Lumen gentium</i> "On the Church"
	Nov 21	Decree "On Ecumenism"
	Nov 21	Decree "On the Eastern Catholic Churches"
1965	Mar 7	Implementation of the Constitution "On the Sacred Liturgy"
	Sept 15	Frater Gerardus begins <b>third year Theology</b>
	Oct. 18	Decree "On the Pastoral Duty of Bishops"
	Oct. 26	Declaration "On the Relationship of the Church to non-Christian Religions"
	Oct. 28	Decree "On Priestly Formation"
	Oct. 28	Declaration "On Christian Education"
	Nov 18	Constitution <i>Dei verbum</i> "On Divine Revelation"
	Nov 18	Decree "On the Apostolate of the Laity"
	Nov 23	Decree for Religious regarding Latin Usage in the Liturgy and the Divine Office
	Dec 7	Constitution <i>Gaudium et spes</i> "On the Church in the Modern World"
	Dec 7	Decrees: "On the Ministry and the Priestly Life"; "On the Missionary Activity of the Church"; Declaration "On Religious Freedom"
1965	Dec 8	<b>Solemn closing of Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pope Paul VI</b>
1966	Jul 10	Frater Gerardus is ordained a Dominican priest
	Aug 6	Motu Proprio <i>Ecclesiae Sanctae</i> implementing the four council decrees
	Aug 15	Apostolic Letter <i>Sacrificium laudis</i> Use of the Liturgical Office for Religious
	Sept 15	Frater Gerardus begins <b>fourth and final year Theology</b>
1967	Mar 5	Instruction <i>Musicam sacram</i> , "Instruction on Music in the Liturgy"
	Mar 26	<i>Populorum progressio</i> "On the Development of Peoples" Pope Paul VI
	May 4	Second Instruction <i>Tres abhinc annos</i> "on the Orderly Implementation of the Constitution on the Liturgy" Congregation for the Sacred Rites
	June 24	<i>Sacerdotalis caelibatis</i> Encyclical of Paul VI on the celibacy of the priest
	July 3	Frater Gerardus assigned to Port of Spain Trinidad, West Indies
	Oct 3	Frater Gerardus arrives at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception POS

Nov 1967 Frater Gerardus assigned as parish priest of St. Catherine Gran Couva with five 'out-stations/schools': Pepper Village, Chickland, Flanagan Town, Brasso and Tabaquite  
 Nov 1970-Oct 1971 assistant pastor in St. Theresa Barataria and St. Peter Carenage;  
 Nov 1967-Oct 1971 occasional chaplain to General Hospital POS, the Royal Gaol POS, the "Hansenian Settlement" (Leprosarium) on Chacachacare Island, Gulf of Paria T&T  
 Oct 1971 in Rome last week of Synod on Ministerial Priesthood and Justice in the World

Sacrosanctum Concilium and the Documents of Vatican II

“[O]n December 4, 1963, the council overwhelmingly gave its approval to the revised text of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, and Paul VI then promulgated it. The final vote was even more of a landslide: 2,147 in favor, 4 against. This was the first document approved by the council and, compared with others, was remarkable for how little it had changed from the original version . . . By approving *Sacrosanctum*, the council set in motion a programmatic reshaping of virtually every aspect of Roman Catholic liturgy unlike anything that had ever been attempted before. . . Within the council itself the vote that originally approved *Sacrosanctum*, on November 14, 1962, had a significance beyond liturgy and worship. It enunciated and gave voice to at least four principles that would be adopted and developed by other documents and help give Vatican II its final profile. The first is the principle of *aggiornamento* . . . [although] the provisions and great themes of the text are as much due to the principle of *ressourcement* . . . The second is the principle of adaptation to local circumstances . . . The third is the principle of episcopal authority and of greater decision making on the local level. The document is thus consonant with the doctrine of episcopal collegiality. The final principle is the full and active participation of everybody present in the liturgical action. This is a principle of engagement and active responsibility, and by implication is extended beyond liturgy to the church at large, to the church as ‘the people of God’.”

- John W. O'Malley *What Happened at Vatican II* Harvard University Press 2008 pp138-141



This diagram is from *The Sower* Vol. 23 No 1, January 2002 © Maryvale Institute and is reproduced here with the kind permission of Editor, Petroc Willey. It also appears on the 'Vatican II-Voice of The Church' website <http://www.vatican2voice.org/4basics/chart.htm> with the following notation:

“This diagram cannot easily be bettered, although a truer concept of the interlinking of themes and teachings might be a 'network'. An important feature of the circular diagram is the clear presentation of the four 'core' documents, as the foundation for the rest.”

*The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the church is directed; it is also the source from which all its power flows. For the goal of apostolic endeavor is that all who are made children of God by faith and Baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of his church, to take part in the sacrifice and to eat the Lord's Supper - Sacrosanctum Concilium #10 - from The Basic Sixteen Documents - Vatican Council II, General Editor Austin P. Flannery O.P. Dominican Publications 2007*

# CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRED LITURGY

## SACROSANCTUM CONCILIUM

SOLEMNLY PROMULGATED BY HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI

ON DECEMBER 4, 1963

### INTRODUCTION

1. This sacred Council has several aims in view: it desires to impart an ever increasing vigor to the Christian life of the faithful; to adapt more suitably to the needs of our own times those institutions which are subject to change; to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ; to strengthen whatever can help to call the whole of mankind into the household of the Church. The Council therefore sees particularly cogent reasons for undertaking the reform and promotion of the liturgy.

9. The sacred liturgy does not exhaust the entire activity of the Church. Before men can come to the liturgy they must be called to faith and to conversion: "How then are they to call upon him in whom they have not yet believed? But how are they to believe him whom they have not heard? And how are they to hear if no one preaches? And how are men to preach unless they be sent?" (Rom. 10:14-15).

10. Nevertheless the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows. For the aim and object of apostolic works is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of His Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord's supper.

12. The spiritual life, however, is not limited solely to participation in the liturgy. The Christian is indeed called to pray with his brethren, but he must also enter into his chamber to pray to the Father, in secret [29]; yet more, according to the teaching of the Apostle, he should pray without ceasing [30]. We learn from the same Apostle that we must always bear about in our body the dying of Jesus, so that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodily frame [31]. This is why we ask the Lord in the sacrifice of the Mass that, "receiving the offering of the spiritual victim," he may fashion us for himself "as an eternal gift" [32].

14. Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people (1 Pet. 2:9; cf. 2:4-5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.

In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else; for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit; and therefore pastors of souls must zealously strive to achieve it, by means of the necessary instruction, in all their pastoral work.

## CHAPTER I : III. The Reform of the Sacred Liturgy

21. In order that the Christian people may more certainly derive an abundance of graces from the sacred liturgy, holy Mother Church desires to undertake with great care a general restoration of the liturgy itself. For the liturgy is made up of immutable elements divinely instituted, and of elements subject to change. These not only may but ought to be changed with the passage of time if they have suffered from the intrusion of anything out of harmony with the inner nature of the liturgy or have become unsuited to it.

In this restoration, both texts and rites should be drawn up so that they express more clearly the holy things which they signify; the Christian people, so far as possible, should be enabled to understand them with ease and to take part in them fully, actively, and as befits a community.

Wherefore the sacred Council establishes the following general norms:

### *A) General norms*

22. 1. Regulation of the sacred liturgy depends solely on the authority of the Church, that is, on the Apostolic See and, as laws may determine, on the bishop.

2. In virtue of power conceded by the law, the regulation of the liturgy within certain defined limits belongs also to various kinds of competent territorial bodies of bishops legitimately established.

3. Therefore no other person, even if he be a priest, may add, remove, or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority.

23. That sound tradition may be retained, and yet the way remain open to legitimate progress Careful investigation is always to be made into each part of the liturgy which is to be revised. This investigation should be theological, historical, and pastoral. Also the general laws governing the structure and meaning of the liturgy must be studied in conjunction with the experience derived from recent liturgical reforms and from the indulgences conceded to various places. Finally, there must be no innovations unless the good of the Church genuinely and certainly requires them; and care must be taken that any new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already existing.

As far as possible, notable differences between the rites used in adjacent regions must be carefully avoided.

24. Sacred scripture is of the greatest importance in the celebration of the liturgy. For it is from scripture that lessons are read and explained in the homily, and psalms are sung; the prayers, collects, and liturgical songs are scriptural in their inspiration and their force, and it is from the scriptures that actions and signs derive their meaning. Thus to achieve the restoration, progress, and adaptation of the sacred liturgy, it is essential to promote that warm and living love for scripture to which the venerable tradition of both eastern and western rites gives testimony.



25. The liturgical books are to be revised as soon as possible; experts are to be employed on the task, and bishops are to be consulted, from various parts of the world.

36. 1. Particular law remaining in force, the use of the Latin language is to be preserved in the Latin rites.

2. But since the use of the mother tongue, whether in the Mass, the administration of the sacraments, or other parts of the liturgy, frequently may be of great advantage to the people, the limits of its employment may be extended. This will apply in the first place to the readings and directives, and to some of the prayers and chants, according to the regulations on this matter to be laid down separately in subsequent chapters.

3. These norms being observed, it is for the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned in Art. 22, 2, to decide whether, and to what extent, the vernacular language is to be used; their decrees are to be approved, that is, confirmed, by the Apostolic See. And, whenever it seems to be called for, this authority is to consult with bishops of neighboring regions which have the same language.

4. Translations from the Latin text into the mother tongue intended for use in the liturgy must be approved by the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned above

And therefore the liturgical life of the parish and its relationship to the bishop must be fostered theoretically and practically among the faithful and clergy; efforts also must be made to encourage a sense of community within the parish, above all in the common celebration of the Sunday Mass. (42)

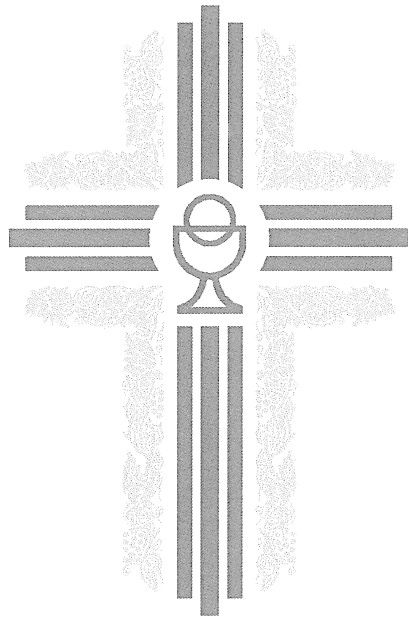
48. The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ's faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators; on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred action conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration. They should be instructed by God's word and be nourished at the table of the Lord's body; they should give thanks to God; by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest, but also with him, they should learn also to offer themselves; through Christ the Mediator [38], they should be drawn day by day into ever more perfect union with God and with each other, so that finally God may be all in all.

For this purpose the rites are to be simplified, due care being taken to preserve their substance; elements which, with the passage of time, came to be duplicated, or were added with but little advantage, are now to be discarded; other elements which have suffered injury through accidents of history are now to be restored to the vigor which they had in the days of the holy Fathers, as may seem useful or necessary. (50)

In Masses which are celebrated with the people, a suitable place may be allotted to their mother tongue. This is to apply in the first place to the readings and "the common prayer," but also, as local conditions may warrant, to those parts which pertain to the people, according to the norm laid down in Art. 36 of this Constitution.

Nevertheless steps should be taken so that the faithful may also be able to say or to sing together in Latin those parts of the Ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them.

[http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19631204\\_sacrosanctum-concilium\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html)



THE  
GENERAL INSTRUCTION  
OF THE  
ROMAN MISSAL

## INTRODUCTION

1. As Christ the Lord was about to celebrate with the disciples the paschal supper in which he instituted the Sacrifice of his Body and Blood, he commanded that a large, furnished upper room be prepared (Luke 22.12). Indeed, the Church has always judged that this command also applied to herself whenever she decided about things related to the disposition of people's minds, and of places, rites and texts for the Celebration of the Most Holy Eucharist. The present norms, too, prescribed in keeping with the will of the Second Vatican Council, together with the new Missal with which the Church of the Roman Rite will henceforth celebrate the Mass, are again a demonstration of this same solicitude of the Church, of her faith and her unaltered love for the supreme mystery of the Eucharist, and also attest to her continuous and consistent tradition, even though certain new elements have been introduced.

### Testimony of an Unaltered Faith

2. The sacrificial nature of the Mass, solemnly defended by the Council of Trent, because it accords with the universal tradition of the Church,<sup>1</sup> was once more stated by the Second Vatican Council, which pronounced these clear words about the Mass: "At the Last Supper, Our Saviour instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice of his Body and Blood, by which the Sacrifice of his Cross is perpetuated until he comes again; and till then he entrusts the memorial of his Death and Resurrection to his beloved spouse, the Church."<sup>2</sup>

What is taught in this way by the Council is consistently expressed in the formulas of the Mass. Moreover, the doctrine which stands out in the following sentence, already notable and concisely expressed in the ancient Sacramentary commonly called the Leonine – "for whenever the memorial of this sacrifice is celebrated the work of our redemption is accomplished"<sup>3</sup> – is aptly and exactly expounded in the Eucharistic Prayers; for as in these the Priest enacts the anamnesis, while turned toward God likewise in the name of all the people, he renders thanks and offers the living and holy sacrifice, that is, the Church's oblation and the sacrificial Victim by whose death God himself willed to reconcile us to himself;<sup>4</sup> and the Priest also prays that the Body and Blood of Christ may be a sacrifice which is acceptable to the Father and which brings salvation to the whole world.<sup>5</sup>

3. So, in the new Missal the rule of prayer (*lex orandi*) of the Church corresponds to her perennial rule of faith (*lex credendi*), by which we are truly taught that the sacrifice of his Cross and its sacramental renewal in the Mass, which Christ the Lord instituted at the Last Supper and commanded his Apostles to do in his memory, are one and the same,

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1 Ecumenical Council of Trent, Session XXII, 17 September 1562: Denzinger-Schönmetzer, nos. 1738–1759.

2 Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 47; cf. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, nos. 3, 28; Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, nos. 2, 4, 5.

3 Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, Prayer over the Offerings. Cf. *Sacramentarium Veronense*, L.C. Mohlberg editor, no. 93.

4 Cf. Eucharistic Prayer III.

5 Cf. Eucharistic Prayer IV.

differing only in the manner of their offering; and as a result, that the Mass is at one and the same time a sacrifice of praise, thanksgiving, propitiation and satisfaction.

3. Moreover, the wondrous mystery of the real presence of the Lord under the Eucharistic species, confirmed by the Second Vatican Council<sup>6</sup> and other teachings of the Church's Magisterium<sup>7</sup> in the same sense and with the same doctrine as the Council of Trent proposed that it must be believed,<sup>8</sup> is proclaimed in the celebration of the Mass, not only by the very words of consecration by which Christ is rendered present through transubstantiation, but also with a sense and a demonstration of the greatest reverence and adoration which strives for realization in the Eucharistic liturgy. For the same reason, the Christian people are led to worship this wondrous Sacrament through adoration in a special way on Thursday of the Lord's Supper in Holy Week and on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ.

4. In truth, the nature of the ministerial priesthood proper to the Bishop and the Priest, who offer the Sacrifice in the person of Christ and who preside over the gathering of the holy people, shines forth in the form of the rite itself, on account of the more prominent place and function given to the Priest. The essential elements of this function are set out and explained clearly and extensively in the Preface for the Chrism Mass on Thursday of Holy Week, the day, namely, when the institution of the priesthood is commemorated. For in the Preface is made clear how the conferral of priestly power is accomplished through the laying on of hands; and, by the listing one by one of its duties, that power is described which is the continuation of the power of Christ, the High Priest of the New Testament.

5. Moreover, by this nature of the ministerial priesthood, something else is put in its proper light, something certainly to be held in great esteem, namely, the royal priesthood of the faithful, whose spiritual sacrifice is brought to completion through the ministry of the Bishop and the Priests, in union with the Sacrifice of Christ, the sole Mediator.<sup>9</sup> For the celebration of the Eucharist is the action of the whole Church, and in it each one should carry out solely but totally that which pertains to him, in virtue of the place of each within the People of God. The result of this is that greater consideration is also given to some aspects of the celebration that have sometimes been accorded less attention in the course of the centuries. For this people is the People of God, purchased by Christ's Blood, gathered together by the Lord, nourished by his word, the people called to present to God the prayers of the entire human family, a people that gives thanks in Christ for the mystery of salvation by offering his Sacrifice, a people, finally, that is brought together in unity by Communion in the Body and Blood of Christ. This people, though holy in its origin,

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6 Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nos. 7, 47; *Presbyterorum ordinis*, nos. 5, 18.

7 Cf. PIUS XII, Encyclical Letter, *Humani generis*, 12 August 1950: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 42 (1950), pp. 570–571; PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter, *Mysterium fidei*, 3 September 1965: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 57 (1965), pp. 762–769; PAUL VI, Solemn Profession of Faith, 30 June 1968, nos. 24–26: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 60 (1968), pp. 442–443; Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, 25 May 1967, nos. 3f, 9: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), pp. 543, 547.

8 Cf. Ecumenical Council of Trent, Session XIII, 11 October 1551: Denzinger-Schönmetzer, nos. 1635–1661.

9 Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, no. 2.

nevertheless grows constantly in holiness by conscious, active, and fruitful participation in the mystery of the Eucharist.<sup>10</sup>

## Uninterrupted Tradition

6. When it set out its instructions for the renewal of the Order of Mass, the Second Vatican Council, using, namely, the same words as did St. PIUS V in the Apostolic Constitution *Quo primum*, by which the Missal of Trent was promulgated in 1570, also ordered, among other things, that a number of rites be restored “to the original norm of the holy Fathers.”<sup>11</sup> From the fact that the same words are used, it can be noted how the two Roman Missals, although four centuries have intervened, embrace one and the same tradition. Furthermore, if the inner elements of this tradition are reflected upon, it is also understood how outstandingly and felicitously the older Roman Missal is brought to fulfilment in the later one.

7. In truly difficult times, when the Catholic faith in the sacrificial nature of the Mass, the ministerial priesthood, and the real and perpetual presence of Christ under the Eucharistic species were called into question, St. PIUS V was first of all concerned with preserving the more recent tradition, then unjustly assailed, introducing only very slight changes into the sacred rite. In fact, the Missal of 1570 differs very little from the very first printed edition of 1474, which in turn faithfully takes up again the Missal used in the time of Pope Innocent III. Moreover, manuscript books in the Vatican Library, even though they provided material for several textual emendations, by no means made it possible to pursue inquiry into “ancient and approved authors” further back than the liturgical commentaries of the Middle Ages.

8. Today, however, innumerable writings of scholars have shed light on the “norm of the holy Fathers” which the revisers of the Missal of St. PIUS V assiduously followed. For following the first publication in 1571 of the Sacramentary called the Gregorian, critical editions of other ancient Roman and Ambrosian Sacramentaries were disseminated, often in printed form, as were ancient Hispanic and Gallican liturgical books; these editions brought to light numerous prayers of no slight spiritual value but previously unknown.

In the same way, traditions of the first centuries, before the rites of East and West were formed, are now better known because of the discovery of so many liturgical documents.

Furthermore, continuing progress in the study of the holy Fathers has also shed upon the theology of the mystery of the Eucharist the light brought by the doctrine of such illustrious Fathers of Christian antiquity as St. Irenaeus, St. Ambrose, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, and St. John Chrysostom.

9. Hence, the “norm of the holy Fathers” requires not only the preservation of what our immediate forebears have handed on to us, but also an understanding and a more profound pondering of the Church’s entire past ages and of all the ways in which her one faith has been expressed in forms of human and social culture so greatly differing among themselves, indeed, as those prevailing in the Semitic, Greek, and Latin regions. Moreover, this broader view allows us to see how the Holy Spirit endows the People of

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 11.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, no. 50.

God with a marvellous fidelity in preserving the unalterable deposit of faith, even though there is a very great variety of prayers and rites.

## Accommodation to New Conditions

10. Hence, the new Missal, while bearing witness to the Roman Church's rule of prayer (*lex orandi*), also safeguards the deposit of faith handed down by the more recent Councils and marks in its turn a step of great importance in liturgical tradition.

For, when the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council reaffirmed the dogmatic pronouncements of the Council of Trent, they spoke at a far different time in world history, and, for that reason, were able to bring forward proposals and measures regarding pastoral life that could not have even been foreseen four centuries earlier.

11. The Council of Trent had already recognized the great catechetical usefulness contained in the celebration of Mass but was unable to bring out all its consequences in regard to actual practice. In fact, many at that time requested that permission be given to use the vernacular in celebrating the Eucharistic Sacrifice. To such a request, the Council, by reason of the circumstances of that age, judged it a matter of duty to answer by insisting once more on the teaching of the Church as had been handed on, according to which the Eucharistic Sacrifice is in the first place the action of Christ himself, whose inherent efficacy is therefore unaffected by the manner in which the faithful participate in it. The Council for this reason stated in these firm and likewise measured words: "Although the Mass contains much instruction for the faithful people, it did not seem to the Fathers expedient, however, that it be celebrated indiscriminately in the vernacular."<sup>12</sup> And the Council declared worthy of censure anyone maintaining that "the rite of the Roman Church, in which part of the Canon and the words of consecration are pronounced in a low voice, is to be condemned, or that the Mass must be celebrated only in the vernacular."<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, at the same time as it prohibited the use of the vernacular in the Mass, it ordered, on the other hand, pastors of souls to put appropriate catechesis in its place: "lest Christ's flock go hungry... the Holy Synod commands pastors and each and all of those others having the care of souls that frequently during the celebration of Mass, either personally or through others, they should explain what is read at Mass; and expound, among other things, something of the mystery of this most holy Sacrifice, especially on Sundays and feast days."<sup>14</sup>

12. Hence, the Second Vatican Council, having come together in order to accommodate the Church to the requirements of her proper apostolic office precisely in these times, considered thoroughly, as had the Council of Trent, the catechetical and pastoral character of the Sacred Liturgy.<sup>15</sup> And since no Catholic would now deny a sacred rite celebrated in Latin to be legitimate and efficacious, the Council was also able to concede that "not rarely adopting the vernacular language may be of great usefulness for the people" and gave permission for it to be used.<sup>16</sup> The eagerness with which this measure was everywhere received has certainly been so great that it has led, under the guidance of the Bishops and the Apostolic See itself, to permission for all liturgical celebrations in which the people

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12 Ecumenical Council of Trent, Session XXII, *Doctrina de ss. Missae sacrificio*, cap. 8, 17 September 1562: Denzinger-Schönmetzer, no. 1749.

13 *Ibidem*, cap. 9: Denzinger-Schönmetzer, no. 1759.

14 *Ibidem*, cap. 8: Denzinger-Schönmetzer, no. 1749.

15 Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 33.

16 *Ibidem*, no. 36.

participate to be in the vernacular, so that the people may more fully understand the mystery which is celebrated.

13. In this regard, although the use of the vernacular in the Sacred Liturgy is a means, admittedly of great importance, for expressing more clearly catechesis on the mystery, a catechesis inherent in the celebration itself, the Second Vatican Council ordered additionally that certain prescriptions of the Council of Trent that had not been followed everywhere be brought to fruition, such as the Homily to be given on Sundays and feast days<sup>17</sup> and the faculty to interject certain explanations during the sacred rites themselves.<sup>18</sup>

Above all, the Second Vatican Council, which recommended “that more perfect form of participation in the Mass by which the faithful, after the Priest’s Communion, receive the Lord’s Body from the same Sacrifice,”<sup>19</sup> called for another desire of the Fathers of Trent to be put into effect, namely, that for the sake of a fuller participation in the Holy Eucharist “at each Mass the faithful present should communicate not only by spiritual desire but also by sacramental reception of the Eucharist.”<sup>20</sup>

14. Prompted by the same intention and pastoral zeal, the Second Vatican Council was able to give renewed consideration to what was established by Trent on Communion under both kinds. And indeed, since nowadays the doctrinal principles on the complete efficacy of Eucharistic Communion received under the species of bread alone are not in any way called into question, the Council gave permission for the reception on occasion of Communion under both kinds, because this clearer form of the sacramental sign offers a particular opportunity for understanding more deeply the mystery in which the faithful participate.<sup>21</sup>

15. In this manner the Church, while remaining faithful to her office as teacher of truth, safeguarding “things old,” that is, the deposit of tradition, fulfills at the same time the duty of examining and prudently adopting “things new” (cf. Matthew 13.52).

For part of the new Missal orders the prayers of the Church in a way more open to the needs of our times. Of this kind are above all the Ritual Masses and Masses for Various Needs, in which tradition and new elements are appropriately brought together. Thus, while a great number of expressions, drawn from the Church’s most ancient tradition and familiar through the many editions of the Roman Missal, have remained unchanged, numerous others have been accommodated to the needs and conditions proper to our own age, and still others, such as the prayers for the Church, for the laity, for the sanctification of human labour, for the community of all nations, and certain needs proper to our era, have been newly composed, drawing on the thoughts and often the very phrasing of the recent documents of the Council.

On account, moreover, of the same attitude toward the new state of the world as it now is, it seemed to cause no harm at all to so revered a treasure if some phrases were changed so that the language would be in accord with that of modern theology and would truly reflect the current state of the Church’s discipline. Hence, several expressions

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17 *Ibidem*, no. 52.

18 *Ibidem*, no. 35, 3.

19 *Ibidem*, no. 55.

20 Ecumenical Council of Trent, Session XXII, *Doctrina de ss. Missae sacrificio*, cap. 6: Denzinger-Schönmetzer, no. 1747.

21 Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 55.



regarding the evaluation and use of earthly goods have been changed, as have several which alluded to a certain form of outward penance which was proper to other periods of the Church's past.

In this way, finally, the liturgical norms of the Council of Trent have certainly been completed and perfected in many particulars by those of the Second Vatican Council, which has carried into effect the efforts to bring the faithful closer to the Sacred Liturgy that have been taken up these last four centuries and especially those of recent times, and above all the attention to the Liturgy promoted by St. PIUS X and his Successors.

CHAPTER I

**THE IMPORTANCE AND DIGNITY  
OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST**

16. The celebration of Mass, as the action of Christ and of the People of God arrayed hierarchically, is the centre of the whole of Christian life for the Church both universal and local, as well as for each of the faithful individually.<sup>22</sup> For in it is found the high point both of the action by which God sanctifies the world in Christ and of the worship that the human race offers to the Father, adoring him through Christ, the Son of God, in the Holy Spirit.<sup>23</sup> In it, moreover, during the course of the year, the mysteries of redemption are celebrated so as to be in some way made present.<sup>24</sup> As to the other sacred actions and all the activities of the Christian life, these are bound up with it, flow from it, and are ordered to it.<sup>25</sup>

17. It is, therefore, of the greatest importance that the celebration of the Mass or the Lord's Supper be so ordered that the sacred ministers and the faithful taking part in it, according to the state proper to each, may draw from it more abundantly<sup>26</sup> those fruits, to obtain which, Christ the Lord instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice of his Body and Blood and entrusted it as the memorial of his Passion and Resurrection to the Church, his beloved Bride.<sup>27</sup>

18. This will fittingly come about if, with due regard for the nature and other circumstances of each liturgical assembly, the entire celebration is arranged in such a way that it leads to a conscious, active, and full participation of the faithful, namely in body and in mind, a participation fervent with faith, hope, and charity, of the sort which is desired by the Church and which is required by the very nature of the celebration and to which the Christian people have a right and duty in virtue of their Baptism.<sup>28</sup>

19. Even though it is on occasion not possible to have the presence and active participation of the faithful, which manifest more clearly the ecclesial nature of the celebration,<sup>29</sup> the celebration of the Eucharist is always endowed with its own efficacy

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22 Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 41; Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, no. 11; Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, nos. 2, 5, 6; Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops, *Christus Dominus*, no. 30; Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis redintegratio*, no. 15; Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, 25 May 1967, nos. 3e, 6: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), pp. 542, 544–545.

23 Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 10.

24 Cf. *ibidem*, no. 102.

25 Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 10; cf. Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, no. 5.

26 Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nos. 14, 19, 26, 28, 30.

27 Cf. *ibidem*, no. 47.

28 Cf. *ibidem*, no. 14.

29 Cf. *ibidem*, no. 41.

and dignity, since it is the act of Christ and of the Church, in which the Priest fulfills his own principal function and always acts for the sake of the people's salvation.

Hence the Priest is recommended to celebrate the Eucharistic Sacrifice, insofar as he can, even daily.<sup>30</sup>

20. Since, however, the celebration of the Eucharist, like the entire Liturgy, is carried out by means of perceptible signs by which the faith is nourished, strengthened, and expressed,<sup>31</sup> the greatest care is to be taken that those forms and elements proposed by the Church are chosen and arranged, which, given the circumstances of persons and places, more effectively foster active and full participation and more aptly respond to the spiritual needs of the faithful.

21. Hence this Instruction aims both to offer general lines for a suitable ordering of the celebration of the Eucharist and to explain the rules by which individual forms of celebration may be arranged.<sup>32</sup>

22. The celebration of the Eucharist in a particular Church is of the utmost importance.

For the Diocesan Bishop, the prime steward of the mysteries of God in the particular Church entrusted to his care, is the moderator, promoter, and guardian of the whole of liturgical life.<sup>33</sup> In celebrations that take place with the Bishop presiding, and especially in the celebration of the Eucharist by the Bishop himself with the Presbyterate, the Deacons, and the people taking part, the mystery of the Church is manifest. Hence, solemn celebrations of Mass of this sort must be exemplary for the entire diocese.

The Bishop should therefore be determined that the Priests, the Deacons, and the lay Christian faithful grasp ever more deeply the genuine significance of the rites and liturgical texts, and thereby be led to the active and fruitful celebration of the Eucharist. To that end, he should also be vigilant in ensuring that the dignity of these celebrations be enhanced and, in promoting such dignity, the beauty of the sacred place, of the music, and of art should contribute as greatly as possible.

23. Moreover, in order that such a celebration may correspond more fully to the prescriptions and spirit of the Sacred Liturgy, and also in order that its pastoral effectiveness be enhanced, certain accommodations and adaptations are set out in this *General Instruction* and in the Order of Mass.

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30 Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, no. 13; *Code of Canon Law*, can. 904.

31 Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 59.

32 Special celebrations of Mass should observe the guidelines established for them: For Masses with particular groups, cf. Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, Instruction, *Actio pastoralis*, 15 May 1969: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 61 (1969), pp. 806–811; for Masses with children, cf. Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, *Directory for Masses with Children*, 1 November 1973: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 66 (1974), pp. 30–46; for the manner of joining the Hours of the Office with the Mass, cf. Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours*, nos. 93–98; for the manner of joining certain blessings and the crowning of an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary with the Mass, cf. *Rituale Romanum, De Benedictionibus*, editio typica, 1984, Praenotanda, no. 28; *Ordo coronandi imaginem beatae Mariae Virginis*, editio typica, 1981, nos. 10 and 14.

33 Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops, *Christus Dominus*, no. 15; cf. also Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 41.

24. These adaptations consist, for the most part, in the choice of certain rites or texts, that is, of the chants, readings, prayers, explanatory interventions, and gestures capable of responding better to the needs, the preparation, and the culture of the participants and which are entrusted to the Priest Celebrant. However, the Priest will remember that he is the servant of the Sacred Liturgy and that he himself is not permitted, on his own initiative, to add, to remove, or to change anything in the celebration of Mass.<sup>34</sup>

25. In addition, at the proper place in the Missal are indicated certain adaptations which in accordance with the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy pertain respectively to the Diocesan Bishop or to the Conference of Bishops<sup>35</sup> (cf. below nos. 387, 388–393).

26. As for variations and the more profound adaptations which give consideration to the traditions and culture of peoples and regions, to be introduced in accordance with article 40 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, for reasons of usefulness or necessity, those norms set out in the *Instruction on the Roman Liturgy and Inculturation*<sup>36</sup> and below in nos. 395–399 are to be observed.

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34 Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 22.

35 Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nos. 38, 40; PAUL VI, Apostolic Constitution, *Missale Romanum*, above.

36 Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Instruction, *Varietates legitimae*, 25 January 1994: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 87 (1995), pp. 288–314.