

WHY ARE OUR BISHOPS SUCH COWARDS?

[P]reach the word: be instant in season, out of season: reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine. For there shall be a time when they will not endure sound doctrine... but... will... turn away their hearing from the truth... II *Tim.* 4: 3-4

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt lose its savour... it is good for nothing any more but to be cast out and to be trodden underfoot by men... *Matt.* 5: 14¹

Why do our bishops behave - in breach of their oaths of consecration - like sheep rather than shepherds? Why do they bow to the atheistic and secular zeitgeist instead of insisting on the need of the populace to reject the age's silly dictates and conform themselves to the natural order instituted by Almighty God for the welfare of mankind and to Catholic truth?

Why do they behave as if they were members of a Masonic lodge, deferring to the authority (as if it had any over them!) of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference? Why do they behave as if bound by some authority superior to the authority given them by Almighty God?

Why do they refrain from giving leadership to the faithful and moral guidance to those crying out for it, the unfaithful and the atheistically blind? Why do they behave as if they were sympathetic to the secular arm and render little more than lip service to Catholic principle? Why do they persist in remaining silent when they should speak?

The reason for these aberrations is, I suggest, that they are not really Catholics. They have embraced a defective, i.e., non-Catholic, *lex credendi* in consequence of celebrating a defective, non-Catholic, *lex orandi*. The rite to which they conform themselves daily forces their conformity to the system of belief it proclaims, a system of belief which is not that of the Catholic religion but of a counterfeit.

In a recent criticism of the initiative of Paul VI in instituting his *novus ordo missae* Canadian philosopher and theologian John Lamont had this to say:

"[T]he Roman Rite itself, not just some of its components, is of divine institution... [accordingly] it is clear that not only does the pope not have the legal power to abolish it, he also does not have the legal power to permit the use of a ritual of human origin in its place. If God has gone to the trouble of providing a liturgy of divine origin for the Church, it is because he intends that this liturgy should be used for his worship, and no-one, including the pope, has the right to attempt to frustrate this intention by replacing it with a ritual that is a human invention."²

He went on to analyse the rite's content:

"[R]eferences to sacrifice, sin, guilt, penance, punishment, hell, the necessity of grace, and divine anger have been almost entirely removed from the Novus Ordo, and the subordination of this world to the next is no longer emphasised or clearly presented... This amounts to a complete removal of the theology of the traditional rite, since the expressions of this theology that are

¹ These readings are part of the liturgy for Mass on the feast of St Ephraem at Mass in Pius V's Roman Missal.

² [Disputation on the 1970 Missal \(Part 1\) – Dr John Lamont | Dialogos Insititute Blog \(dialogos-institute.org\)](http://dialogos-institute.org) : J.R.T. Lamont BA (Hons), S.T.L., D. Phil. (Oxon).

preserved in the Novus Ordo have their meanings fundamentally changed by the new context... The meaning of God's love, for example, is entirely different in a context where sin, guilt, divine punishment, expiation, and hell are present, as opposed to a context in which they are absent..."

He concluded that the theology presented by the Church's traditional liturgy (codified by Pius V in 1570 in obedience to a directive of the Council of Trent) is missing from the *novus ordo missae* and accordingly that this rite cannot be a form of the traditional Roman Rite.

Dr Lamont is not the first theologian to criticise Paul VI's initiative. The late Fr Gregory Hesse S.T.D., S.J.D. did so in a series of audio and video tapes which are still available on the internet.³ Fr Hesse's reasoning serves to ground the theological position taken by Dr Lamont. Shortly stated, it is this: the principle *Legem credendi lex statuit supplicandi* (or *lex orandi, lex credendi*)—the law of prayer establishes the law of belief—laid down by Prosper of Aquitaine (390-455 AD), was applied by the Church up until 1947 when Pius XII sought to invert it in his encyclical *Mediator Dei*. In doing so Pius XII did the Church a disservice. The ravaging of Catholic belief that has accompanied the 'novus ordo missae' is eloquent of the accuracy of the principle in its original form.

Enter Pope Francis and *Traditionis Custodes*.

Traditionis Custodes

The apostolic letter *Traditionis Custodes*, issued July 16th, 2021, is fundamentally flawed because it relies on a false premise, one shared by each of the Pope's predecessors. Paul VI in his *Missale Romanum* (April 3rd, 1969), John Paul II in his *Ecclesia Dei* (July 2nd, 1988) and Benedict XVI in his *Summorum Pontificum* (July 7th, 2007), each treats the issue of the celebration of Holy Mass according to the Roman Rite as if it is a matter of discipline (whose terms any pope may alter at will), rather than a matter of faith which the Church has long since laid down definitively to be held forever by all the faithful.

The document in which Christ's Church did this is the bull *Quo primum* (July 13th, 1570) of Pius V referred to above. Its terms are draconian.

In order that all everywhere may adopt and observe what has been delivered to them by the Holy Roman Church, Mother and Mistress of the other churches, it shall be unlawful henceforth and forever throughout the Christian world to sing or to read Masses according to any formula other than that of this Missal We have published; this ordinance to apply to all churches and chapels, with or without the care of souls, patriarchal, collegiate and parochial, be they secular or belonging to a religious Order, whether of men (including the military Orders) or of women, in which conventual Masses are, or ought to be, sung in choir or read privately according to the rites and customs of the Roman Church... and We decree under penalty of Our indignation that to this newly published Missal nothing at any time is to be added, subtracted or altered; this We determine and ordain to hold in perpetuity by virtue of this Constitution.

...

³ See https://www.superflumina.org/PDF_files/contrasting-lamont-and-hesse.pdf for an analysis of their respective positions. The relevant audiotapes are now nn. 5 and 11.

We strictly command, and We issue this command by virtue of holy obedience, that each and every patriarch, administrator and other person of whatsoever ecclesiastical dignity, be he even a Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church or possessed of any other rank or pre-eminence, set aside wholly and entirely in the future all other observances and rites and Missals, no matter how ancient they may be, that they have been accustomed to use, that they reject them entirely, and that they sing and read Mass according to the rite, the mode and the norm of this Missal which is now issued by Us; and let them not presume to add or recite other ceremonies and prayers in the celebration of Mass than those that are contained in this Missal.

...

No one may be required to offer Holy Mass otherwise than determined by Us; neither Pastors, Administrators, Canons, Chaplains, or other secular priests or religious of whatsoever Order or by whatsoever title designated: and We likewise determine and declare that no one may be compelled or pressed by anyone to change this Missal, or that this letter should ever be recalled, or its effectiveness be restrained, but that it shall forever remain valid and have the force of law...

...

No one, whosoever he be, is permitted to infringe or rashly contravene this notice of Our permission, statute, regulation, mandate, precept, grant, indult, declaration, will, decree and prohibition; nor is he allowed, temerarily, to act against it. But should anyone presume to attempt to do so, let him know that he will incur the wrath of Almighty God and of Saints Peter and Paul, His Apostles.

The popes who followed Pius V for 400 years were in no doubt as to the force or effect of the words of their saintly predecessor. Thirty three popes, including John XXIII, treated *Quo primum* as addressing a matter of faith, as irreformable as a papal definition such as that declaring the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin (*Ineffabilis Deus*, December 8th, 1854), or of her bodily Assumption into Heaven (*Munificentissimus Deus*, November 1st, 1950).

Pope Paul VI, to the infinite peril of his soul, departed from the doctrine contained in *Quo primum*. Each of his successors has followed him in that error.

Accordingly, the terms of Pope Francis's apostolic letter *Traditionis Custodes* are of no effect whatsoever.

Here then is the challenge for the Catholic bishop. Until such time as he realises his error, ceases to celebrate the defective, and un-Catholic, rite of the *novus ordo missae* and returns to the only celebration of the Roman Rite of Mass that Christ's Church has promulgated, he will continue to fail in his duties as a bishop. He will continue to betray his oath of office; he will continue to conduct himself as a coward.

Michael Baker

June 18th, 2022—*St Ephraem, Doctor of the Church*