

THE STATUS OF THE *NOVUS ORDO MISSAE* – PART II

“In order that all everywhere may adopt and observe what has been delivered to them by the Holy Roman Church, Mother and Mistress of all 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 and We decree... [that] nothing is to be added, subtracted or altered at any time; this We determine and ordain and hold in perpetuity...”

Pius V, *Quo primum*, July 14, 1570

When Pope Pius V canonised the Roman rite of Mass in 1570 in his bull *Quo primum* he addressed a matter of faith, not discipline. He bound each of his successors thereafter forever as he would have done had he proclaimed a doctrine such as Pius IX’s defining of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin or Pius XII’s defining of her bodily Assumption into heaven. This is the burden of our earlier article on this topic.¹ The proofs from principle, and from the agreement of innumerable of Pius V’s successors, have been set forth there.

The late Fr Gregory Hesse, on whose arguments we relied, concluded that the act of Pope Paul VI in publishing (but neglecting to promulgate!) the *novus ordo missae* in breach of the terms of *Quo primum* and in breach of the directives of the Council of Trent, was accordingly illicit, as was the novel rite itself. He concluded from the rite’s content that it must also be schismatic.

In his analysis of the *novus ordo* in his *Phoenix from the Ashes*, historian Henry Sire argues that the *novus ordo* is not an expression of Catholic orthodoxy but of heresy. He writes:

“[I]n the two years that followed the closure of the council Msgr. Bugnini and his entourage... set about remaking the Mass according to the heretical doctrines that were then becoming rampant in the Church. The first element was an assimilation to Protestantism... but the rejection of tradition in fact went much further than Protestantism. It was embodied in the flood of Modernist publications, appealing to an imaginary idea of primitive Christianity and submerging the sacramental reality of the Mass in the human action. The *Novus Ordo* can only be interpreted in the light of those concepts, of which it is the liturgical expression.

“This could be gathered from the rite itself, but Msgr. Bugnini spared us the trouble of interpretation. He defined his new theology in the General Instruction published with the *Novus Ordo* on April 3, 1969. The understanding of the Mass that it preaches is set out in Article 7: ‘The Lord’s Supper, or the Mass, is the sacred assembly or gathering together of the people of God, with the priest presiding, to celebrate the memorial of the Lord. For this reason, the promise of Christ is particularly true of a local congregation of the Church: where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in their midst.’ We see here a compendium of the Modernist doctrines regarding the Mass:

- the acceptance of the Protestant notion of the Eucharist as the ‘Lord’s Supper’, without attention to the proper scriptural use of that term;
- the spurious concept of the priest’s ‘presiding’ at the Mass, instead of his offering the sacrifice by his priestly power *in persona Christi*;

¹ Cf. https://www.superflumina.org/PDF_files/status-novus-ordo.pdf

- the presentation of the Mass as a ‘memorial’ instead of the re-enactment of the sacrifice of Christ;
- the implication that the essence of the Mass resides in the assembly of the people and not in its character as Christ’s sacrifice; and, worst of all,
- the suggestion that Christ is present in the Mass by virtue of the people’s gathering and not through his real presence in the Blessed Sacrament.

As to the last, the disparity between the two forms of presence is such that nobody who believed in the true nature of the Mass could credibly have penned such a misstatement of it. In this Bugninan doctrine we see the culmination of Protestant thinking, which rejected the doctrine of the Eucharist as sacrifice and thus lost the conviction, held by mankind since the earliest times, of the need to offer sacrifice to God...”²

Sire’s criticism sounds with the remark of Fr Hesse that no licit order of Mass *in any rite* has ever omitted prayers to the Blessed Trinity.³ In the rite canonised by Pius V in 1570 such prayers appear at the close of the Offertory (*Suscipe, Sancta Trinitas*) and at the end of Mass (*Placeat tibi, Sancta Trinitas*). No such prayers are to be found in the *novus ordo*.

Sire suggests certain ‘improvements’ that might have been made to the Roman rite of Mass by the reformers under Paul VI. He does this because he fails to understand that *Trent* and *Quo primum* dealt with a matter of faith, not discipline; fails to see that Pius V established the form in which is to be said for all time. Notwithstanding these limitations, his study of the defective approach of Msgr. Bugnini, and the error of Pope Paul VI in adopting Bugnini’s defects, is admirable.

When, on the feast of Saints Peter and Paul in 1972, Pope Paul VI lamented that the smoke of Satan had entered the Temple of God through some fissure, he spoke prophetically and with immense irony. The first element of this irony is that he, the pope, was the fissure. The second is that he should have uttered this condemnation of his own conduct on the feast of St Paul, whose name he had taken, and of St Peter, whose office he exercised. The words of Pius V in *Quo primum* deserve to be repeated:

No one, whosoever he be (nulli omnino hominum), is permitted to infringe or rashly contravene this notice of Our permission... nor is he allowed to act against it temerarily. 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.

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December 8th, 2022 — *Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin*

² H J A Sire, *Phoenix from the Ashes, The Making, Unmaking and Restoration of Catholic Tradition*, Kettering OH (Angelico Press), 2015, pp. 276-7. The bullet points have been interpolated in the quoted text by the present writer.

³ Cf. *The Status of the Novus Ordo Missae* at https://www.superflumina.org/PDF_files/status-novus-ordo.pdf