

The Reform of the Roman Liturgy (Msgr Klaus Gamber)

Where the Modern Liturgy Went Wwrong

By Michael Davies

In his second Epistle to the Thessalonians St. Paul admonished them to stand fast and keep the traditions which they had learned either by word of mouth or from his epistles (II Thess 2:14). Writing in the fourth century, St. Jerome observed: "the best advice that I can give you is this: Church traditions - especially when they do not run counter to the faith - are to be observed in the form in which previous generations have handed which we have received from the fathers of old".

The principle enshrined in these quotations had been implemented consistently by every Pope until the pontificate of Pope Paul VI.

The significance of the Reform of the roman liturgy with its severe critique of the new Mass derives not so much from what it says but from who says it. As Cardinal Ratzinger expressed it, Msgr. Gamber was "the one scholar, who, among the army of pseudo-liturgists, truly represents the liturgical thinking of the center of the Church." Quite an endorsement of three cardinals, Oddi, Stickler and Ratzinger.

In his preface to the French edition of Msgr. Gamber's book, Cardinal Ratzinger has this to say on the subject of post-conciliar renewal:

"What happened after the Council was something else entirely: in the place of liturgy as the fruit of development came fabricated liturgy. We abandoned the organic, living process of growth and development over centuries, and replaced it - as in a manufacturing process - with a fabrication, a banal on -the-spot product. Gamber, with the vigilance of a true prophet and the courage of a true witness, opposed this falsification, and, indefatigably taught us about the living fullness of a true liturgy". What, then, does this true prophet have to say about a reform which is, in reality, a continued revolution? "The pastoral benefits that so many idealists had hoped the new liturgy would bring did not materialize. Our churches emptied in spite of the new liturgy (or because of it?), and the faithful continued to fall away from the Church in droves." And again: "In the end, we will all have to recognize that the new liturgical forms, well intentioned as they may have been at the beginning, did not provide the people with bread, but with stones."

Canon 214 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law states that the faithful are entitled to the prescriptions of their own rite. Many of the faithful of the roman rite find it impossible to recognize what takes place in their parish churches each Sunday as their own rite, despite the fact that the Vatican II liturgy constitution ordered that all existing liturgical rites should be preserved and fostered in every way. Cardinal Ratzinger has remarked: "Today we might ask: is there a Latin Rite at all any more? Certainly there is no awareness of it. To most people the liturgy appears to be something for the individual congregation to arrange."

Destruction

The Cardinal's acceptance that the traditional Latin or Roman rite no longer exists does no more than confirm the frank acceptance of this fact in 1976 by Fr. Joseph Gelineau, one of the most influential members of the Commission which composed the New Mass: "The Roman Rite as we knew it no longer exists. It has been destroyed." Msgr Gamber testifies to the destruction of the Roman rite several times in his book:

"The real destruction of the traditional Mass, of the traditional Roman rite with a history of more than one thousand years, is the wholesale destruction of the faith on which it was based, a faith that has been source of our piety and our courage to bear witness to Christ and his Church, the inspiration of countless Catholics over many centuries. Will someone, some day, be able to say the same thing about the New Mass?" Msgr Gamber also insists, quite correctly, that the replacement of the Traditional order of Mass by the Novus Ordo Missae, is not simply a flagrant breach with tradition but a contravention of what the liturgy constitution of the Council actually ordered:

"Unfortunately, and in summary, the Council's urging in Article 23 that 'there must be no innovations unless the good of the Church genuinely and certainly requires them' has been widely ignored . . . Although the argument is used over and over again by the people responsible for creating the New Mass, they cannot claim that what they have done is what the council actually wanted. The instructions given by the liturgy Commission were general in nature, and they opened up possible ways for implementing what the commission had stipulated, but one statement we can make with certainty is that the new ordo of the Mass that has now emerged would not have been endorsed by the majority of the Council Fathers ".

Liturgical bureaucrats frequently use the argument that if Pope St. Pius V was able to promulgate a new Missal in 1570, there is no reason why Pope Paul VI should not have done the same thing four hundred years later. But, of course, Pope Paul VI did not do the same thing. St. Pius V did no more than codify the existing Missal with a few changes that did not affect the actual order of the Mass. Msgr Gamber writes: "The reform under Pope Paul VI was in no way comparable to that of St. Pius V, as the former for the first time in the entire history of the Church broke with tradition and authorized what was an artificially created rite. Msgr Gamber states correctly that the council gave no mandate to introduce a new rite of Mass. It simply called for a revision of the existing one. In a very radical analysis, Gamber suggests that Pope Paul VI exceeded his authority in introducing the Novus Ordo: "The argument could be made that the Pope's authority to introduce a new liturgical rite, that is, to do so without a decision by a Council, can be derived from the 'full and highest power' (*plena et supreme potestas*) he has had in the Church, as cited by the First Vatican Council, i.e., power over matters *quae ad disciplinam ad regimen ecclesiae per totum orbem diffusae pertinent* (That pertain to the discipline and the rule of the Church spread out over the world' - Denziger, 1831)."

However the term *disciplina* in no way applies to the liturgical rite of the Mass, particularly in the light of the fact that the popes have repeatedly observed that the rite is founded on

apostolic tradition. For this reason alone, the rite cannot fall into category of "discipline and rule of the Church".

To this we can add that there is not a single document, including the *Codex Iuris Canonici*, in which there is a specific statement that the Pope, in his function as the supreme pastor of the Church, has the authority to abolish the traditional liturgical rite. In fact, nowhere is it mentioned that the pope has the authority to change even a single local liturgical tradition. The fact that there is no mention of such authority strengthens our case considerably.

There are clearly defined limits to *plena et suprema potestas* (Full and highest power) of the pope. For example, there is no question that, even in matters of dogma, he still has to follow the traditions of the universal Church - that is, as St. Vincent of Lerins says, what has been believed, always, everywhere and by all (*quod semper, quod ubique quod ab omnibus*). In fact, there are several authors who state quite explicitly that it is clearly outside the pope's scope of authority to abolish the traditional rite. Thus the eminent theologian Suarez (1617), citing even earlier authorities such as St. Cajetan, took the position that a pope would be schismatic "if he as is his duty, would not be in full communion with the body of the Church as , for example, if he were to excommunicate the entire Church, or if he were to change all the liturgical rites of the Church that have upheld by apostolic tradition."

And what of the result of such an unprecedented breach with tradition?

"As we have already observed, the liturgical reform welcomed with so much idealism and hope by many priest and lay people alike has turned out to be a liturgical destruction of startling proportions a debacle worsening with each passing year. Instead of the hoped-for renewal of a fruitful destruction of the forms of Mass which had developed organically during the course of many centuries."

False Translation

In Chapter Five of his book Msgr Gamber conducts a detailed examination of the actual changes made in the traditional rite and suggests that they must "Be understood as the deliberate destruction of the traditional order because the newly placed Accent clearly contradict the traditional faith from which the traditional order because the newly placed accents clearly contradict the traditional faith from which the traditional rite has developed."

He does not mince his words in this analysis and has, for example, the following to say about the false translation of *pro multis*: "Pope Paul VI saw fit to alter the words of Consecration and Institution, unchanged in the Roman Liturgy for 1,500 years- a change that was never intended by the Council nor is of any discernible pastoral benefit. Truly problematic, in fact truly scandalous, is the translation of the phrase *pro multis* as "for all", a translation inspired by modern theological thinking but not found in any historic liturgical text."

In Chapter V and Chapters XII to XV, Msgr Gamber provides a meticulously documented study of the questions of the Mass facing the people. He shows that it has never been the custom in the Roman Catholic Church, is a clear breach with liturgical tradition of both Eastern and Western Christians, and brings no obvious pastoral benefits. In other words, the continuing destruction worldwide of countless numbers of (in many cases) beautiful, magnificently constructed Catholic sanctuaries has really been based on an historical myth.

Moreover, Mass facing the people has undermined the entire ethos of the sacrificial nature of the Mass, with the cost incalculable in terms of our artistic heritage, and most incalculable of all in its cost to souls - of Catholics alienated from their Church by the literal and metaphorical destruction of their Catholic heritage.

Msgr Gamber also denounces the changes in the calendar, both in the saints' days and the method of counting Sundays, and in the completely new order of readings, as devoid of any spiritual advantage to the faithful, and poses the most pertinent question: "Was all this really done because of a pastoral concern about the souls of the faithful, or did it not rather represent a radical breach with the traditional rite, to prevent the further use of the liturgical texts and thus to make the celebration of the "Tridentine Mass" impossible because it no longer reflected the new spirit moving through the Church?"

In Chapter XI Msgr Gamber pin-points the fundamental deficiency of the new liturgy in the most radical manner that I have yet encountered, terming it as nothing but the liturgical expression of Modernist Theology: "Great is the confusion! Who can still see clearly in this darkness? Where in the Church are the leaders who can show us the right path? Where are the bishops courageous enough to cut out the cancerous growth of modernist theology that has implanted itself and is festering within the celebration of even the most sacred mysteries, before the cancer spreads and causes even greater damage?"

And what is Msgr Gamber's solution to the adverse consequences of the liturgical reform, a reform which as far as this writer can discern has borne no good fruits and has no redeeming features? "In the final analysis, this means that in the future the traditional rite of the Mass must be retained in the Roman Catholic Church, and not only as a means to accommodate older priests and lay people, but as the primary Liturgical form for the celebration of the Mass. It must become once more the norm of our faith and the symbol of Catholic unity throughout the world, a rock of stability in a period of upheaval and change."

There is not the least doubt that the liberal bureaucracy which controls the church in English-speaking countries today will do all in its power to keep the existence of a book such as this unknown to the faithful. At least one leading Catholic weekly in the United States has refused to take a paid advertisement for the book on the grounds that it is divisive! Anything less divisive than the liturgy it critiques would be hard to imagine. It is vital that this book be widely circulated and publicized in order to help break through the barrier of official silence which continues to mask the costly errors of judgment that have occurred under the banner of liturgical renewal.