

Castrillón to Bishops of Latin America Pope wishes to “extend the possible use of the 1962 books to all Latin Church”

Editor’s Comment:

One can see a deliberate build-up in pronouncements concerning the *Moto Proprio* but this latest from Cardinal *Castrillón Hoyos* contains some significant statements:

1. The activity of the *Ecclesia Dei* Commission, by the will of the Holy Father, now extends its service to satisfy the just aspirations of Catholics not connected to the SSPX but who wish to keep alive the ancient Latin Liturgy & the other Sacraments;
2. The Holy Father wishes the *Ecclesia Dei* Commission to be an organ of the Holy See with the proper and distinct end of preserving and maintaining the worth of the Traditional Latin Liturgy;
3. Mention is made:
 - of extending to the entire Latin Church the possibility of celebrating Holy Mass and the Sacraments according to the Liturgical books of ‘62;
 - of the Tridentine Mass never having been abolished and
 - the Cardinalatial Commission of ‘86 is mentioned;
4. The Campos Apostolic Administration has proved to be a successful model and “we hope that this model will yield good fruits, also in other places of the Church where Catholic faithful with diverse liturgical sensibilities live together”.

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Cardinal Castrillón Hoyos, President of the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei* and a member of the Fifth General Conference of Latin American Bishops, delivered the following address yesterday in Aparecida.

Dear and Venerable Brothers,

I allow myself to present a brief information on the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei* and on the state of the pastoral reality which the Holy Father has placed under its competence.

This Commission was created by the Servant of God John Paul II in 1988, when a notable group of priests, religious, and faithful, who had made manifest their discontent with the Conciliar liturgical reform and who had congregated themselves under the leadership of French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, separated themselves from him because they were not in agreement with the schismatic action of the ordination of Bishops without the appropriate pontifical mandate. They preferred, therefore, to stay in full union with the Church. The Holy Father, by way of the Motu Proprio *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta*, entrusted the pastoral care of these Traditionalist faithful to this Commission.

Nowadays, the activity of the Commission is not limited to the service of those faithful who, at that time, wished to remain in full communion with the Church, nor to the efforts made to put an end to the painful schismatic situation and to attain the return of these brothers of the Saint Pius X fraternity to full communion. By the will of the Holy Father, this Dicastery extends its service, moreover, to satisfy the just aspirations of those who, due to a particular sensibility, and not having kept links to the above-mentioned groups, wish to keep alive the ancient Latin Liturgy in the celebration of the Eucharist and of the other Sacraments.

Undoubtedly, the most important effort, which concerns the entire Church, is the search for an end to the schismatic action and to rebuild the full communion, without ambiguities. **The Holy Father, who was for some years a member of this Commission, wishes it to become an organ of the Holy**

See with the proper and distinct end of preserving and maintaining the worth of the Traditional Latin Liturgy. Yet it must be said with all clarity that it is not a turning back, a return to the time before the 1970 reform. **It is, instead, a generous offer of the Vicar of Christ who, as an expression of his pastoral will, wishes to put at the disposal of the whole Church all the treasures of the Latin Liturgy which for centuries has nourished the spiritual life of so many generations of Catholic faithful. The Holy Father wishes to preserve the immense spiritual, cultural, and aesthetic treasures linked to the Ancient Liturgy.** The retrieval of this wealth is linked to the no less precious one of the current Liturgy of the Church.

For these reasons, **the Holy Father has the intention of extending to the entire Latin Church the possibility of celebrating Holy Mass and the Sacraments according to the liturgical books promulgated by Blessed John XXIII in 1962.** There is today a new and renewed interest for this liturgy, **which has never been abolished** and which, as we have said, is considered a treasure, and also for this reason [the interest] **the Holy Father believes that the time has come to ease, as the first Cardinalial Commission of 1986 had wished to do, the access to this liturgy, making it an extraordinary form of the one Roman Rite.**

There are good experiences of communities of religious or apostolic life recently erected by the Holy See which celebrate this liturgy in peace and serenity. Groups of faithful who attend these celebrations with joy and gratitude assemble around them. The most recent establishments are the Institute of Saint Philip Neri, in Berlin, which functions as an Oratory, and which is also present, and well received, in the Diocese of Trier; the Institute of the Good Shepherd, of Bordeaux, which gathers together priests, seminarians, and faithful, some of them from the Fraternity of Saint Pius X. The proceedings for the recognition of a contemplative community, the Oasis of Jesus Priest, of Barcelona, are well advanced.

In Latin America, as is well known, we must thank the Lord for the return of a whole diocese, that of Campos, Lefebvrian in the past, which now, after five years, presents good fruits. It was a peaceful return and the faithful who have

enrolled themselves in the Apostolic Administration are glad to be able to live in peace in their parochial communities; furthermore, in effect, some Brazilian dioceses have made contacts with the Campos Apostolic Administration, which has placed priests at their disposal for the pastoral care of the Traditionalist faithful in their local churches. The Holy Father's project has been partly proved in Campos, where the peaceful cohabitation of the forms of the only Roman Rite in the Church is a beautiful reality. We have the hope that this model will yield good fruits, also in other places of the Church where Catholic faithful with diverse liturgical sensibilities live together. And we hope, furthermore, that this way of living together will also attract those Traditionalists which still remain far away.

The current members of the Commission are Cardinals Julián Herranz, Jean-Pierre Ricard, William Joseph Levada, Antonio Cañizares, and Franc Rodé. Its consultants are the Undersecretaries of some Dicasteries.

Several communities spread throughout the world have been up to now under *Ecclesia Dei*. 300 priests, 79 religious men, 300 religious women, 200 seminarians, and several hundreds of thousands of faithful. The interest of the young curiously increases in France, the United States, Brazil, Italy, Scandinavia, Australia, and China. At the moment of its return, 50 priests, around 50 seminarians, 100 religious women, and 25,000 faithful came from Campos.

Today, the group of the Lefebvrians includes 4 Bishops who were ordained by Mons. Lefebvre, 500 priests, and 600,000 faithful. Several contemplative monasteries, and some male and female religious groups have joined the group, which has parishes (they call them priories), seminaries, and associations. They are present in 26 countries.

Let us ask the Lord that this project of the Holy Father may soon be accomplished for the unity of the Church.

There are, naturally, several extremely important aspects in the Cardinal's address in Aparecida. For those who remained skeptical (are there any left?), another confirmation of the Holy Father's determined will to "extend to the entire Latin Church" the celebration of Holy Mass (and **all other Sacraments**)

according to the 1962 liturgical books. While that merely confirms the clear words of Cardinal Bertone, it is quite an improvement for Castrillón who until very recently still presented the matter as probable, not as certain — as he clearly does in his Aparecida speech.

The address also confirms, for those who still had any doubts about its existence and findings (which had been confirmed by one of its members, but in a more informal setting), that the Cardinalatial Commission of 1986 recommended that the restrictions on the Traditional Rite of the Church be eased. Naturally, it is extremely frustrating to once again see that such an important step could have been taken 21 years ago, and could have preserved so many priests and faithful from so much pain...

Nonetheless, Pope Benedict seems quite determined to accomplish this which could be the most important act of his pontificate: the establishment (out of his own will, *motu proprio*) of a clear legal framework for the “Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite”.

The End.