

TRUE AND FALSE LITURGICAL REFORM

By Michael Davies

The Nature of Liturgy

The word Liturgy is derived from a Greek composite word (leitourgia) meaning originally "a public duty, a service to the state undertaken by a citizen". From this we have leitourgos "a man who performs a public duty", "a public servant". At Athens public services would be performed by the wealthier citizens at their own expense, such as the office of the trierarchus, who provided a warship for the state. The meaning of the word Liturgy was extended to cover any general service of a public kind. In the Septuagint, the most influential Greek version of the Old Testament, it is used for the public service of the temple (e.g., Ex., xxxviii, 27; xxxix, 12, etc.) . Thence it comes to have a religious sense as the function of the priests in the ritual service of the temple (e.g., Joel, I, 9; ii, 17, etc.) . In the New Testament this religious meaning has become definitely established. In Luke, 1:23, Zachary goes home when "the days of his liturgy" are over. In Hebrews 8:6, Our Lord Jesus Christ is designated as the leitourgos of the New Law who has obtained for us "a better liturgy", that is a better kind of public religious service than that of the Temple. So in Christian use liturgy meant the public official service of the Church, that corresponded to the official service of the Temple in the Old Law.[\[1\]](#)

From the time of the Last Supper until the Pontificate of St. Gregory the Great we can speak only of liturgical development and not of liturgical reform, reform being understood as a change decided upon and imposed from above.

Historical factors played a crucial role in the manner in which the liturgy developed. During times of persecution brevity and simplicity would be its principal characteristics for obvious reasons. The toleration of Christianity under Constantine I, and its adoption as the religion of the Empire under Theodosius I (379-95), had a dramatic effect on the development of ritual. Congregations increased in size; and benefactions for the building and furnishing of churches resulted in the enrichment of vessels and vestments. Those presenting such gifts would naturally want them to be of the richest and most beautiful nature possible. In a parallel and natural development the liturgical rites became more elaborate, with solemn processions and stress upon the awesome nature of the rite. From about the fourth century complete liturgical texts were compiled.

The Gregorian Sacramentary

The earliest Roman Sacramentaries are the first complete sources for the Roman Rite. These were written in the Latin language which had gradually replaced Greek as the language of the Roman liturgy. Scholars differ as to the precise time when the transition was complete, giving dates from the second half of the third century up to the end of the fourth.

Both languages must have been used side by side during a fairly long period of transition. The most important Of the Sacramentaries is that of St. Gregory the Great who became Pope in 590, and reigned until 604. His achievements during those fourteen years almost defy credibility. Prominent among the many important reforms that he undertook was that of the liturgy. His pontificate marks an epoch in the history of the Roman Mass, which, in every important respect, he left in the state that we still have it.

The keynote of the reform of St. Gregory was fidelity to the traditions that had been handed down (the root meaning of the Latin word traditio is to hand over or hand down). His reform consisted principally of the simplification and more orderly arrangement of the existing rite-not the composition of a new one. The Order of Mass as found in the 1570 Missal of St. Pius V (1566-1572), apart from minor additions and amplifications, corresponds very closely to the order established by St. Gregory. It is also to this great Pope that we owe, to a large extent, the codification of the incomparable chant that bears his name. From this time forward there is little to chronicle of the nature of change in the order of the Mass itself, which had become a sacred and inviolable inheritance-its origin

forgotten. Although the rite of Mass did continue to develop after the time of St. Gregory, Father Fortescue explains that:

All later modifications were fitted into the old arrangement, and the most important parts were not touched. From, roughly, the time of St. Gregory we have the text of the Mass, its order and arrangement, as a sacred tradition that no one has ventured to touch except in unimportant details.[2]

The Protestant Reformation

The first radical reform of the liturgy in more than 1500 years of the Christian faith occurred during the 16th century Protestant reformation when the principle of fidelity to tradition was rejected in favour of the principle of the destruction of tradition. The founders of the various Protestant sects were, in fact, revolutionaries rather than reformers. Their concern was not to reform the existing order but to introduce a new one that conformed to their heretical beliefs. Monsignor Philip Hughes, in his classic study, *The Reformation in England*, notes that all revolutionaries are motivated by a common spirit:

The mania to ensure that all future history should date from their own reconstruction of primitive glory as they imagined this, characterized these revolutionaries, as it has characterized all the rest, the social and political rebels as truly as the religious They were determined to destroy all that lay between themselves and the restoration of primitive Christianity as they conceived this to have been.[3]

There was little enthusiasm for the changes among the mass of the faithful, and sometimes fierce opposition. Commenting on the introduction of first (1549) Prayer Book of Thomas Cranmer, the apostate Archbishop of Canterbury, the Protestant historian Sir Maurice Powicke explains with admirable clarity why this was something which tens of thousands of humble Catholics would not tolerate, and why the peasants of the west rose in rebellion:

The real cause of the opposition of country clergy and Devonshire peasants was the proof which the Prayer Book seemed to give that *all the agitations and change of the last few years really were going to end in a permanent cleavage between the past and the present, and the familiar was to give way to something strange, foreign, imposed.*

Father Fortescue, notes that:

The Protestant Reformers naturally played havoc with the old liturgy. It was throughout the expression of the very ideas the Real Presence, Eucharistic Sacrifice and so on they rejected. So they substituted for it new Communion services that expressed their principle but, of course, broke away utterly from all historic liturgical evolution.[4]

It would be impossible to exaggerate the importance of Father Fortescue's insistence that in composing new services the Protestant Reformers "broke away utterly from all historic liturgical evolution". In 1898, referring to the reform of Cranmer, the Catholic Bishops of the Province of Westminster insisted that local churches are not entitled to devise new rites:

They must not omit or reform anything in those forms which immemorial tradition has bequeathed to us. For such an immemorial usage, whether or not it has in the course of ages incorporated superfluous accretions, must, in the estimation of those who believe in a divinely guarded, visible Church, at least have retained whatever is necessary; so that in adhering rigidly to the rite handed down to us we can always feel secure: whereas, if we omit or change anything, we may perhaps be abandoning just that element which is essential . . . that they were permitted to subtract prayers and ceremonies in previous use, and even to remodel the existing rites in a most drastic manner, is a proposition for which we know of no historical foundation, and which appears to us absolutely incredible.[5]

accepted principle with regard to liturgical worship is that the doctrinal standpoint of a Christian body must necessarily be reflected in its worship. Liturgical rites should express what they contain. It is not necessary for the Catholic position to be expressly contradicted for a rite to become suspect; the suppression of prayers which had given liturgical expression to the doctrine behind the rite is more than sufficient to give cause for concern. This principle is embodied in the phrase *legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi* ("let the law of prayer fix the law of faith")-in other words the liturgy of the Church is a sure guide to her teaching. This is usually presented in the abbreviated form of *lex orandi, lex credendi*, and can be translated freely as meaning that the manner in which the Church worships (*lex orandi*) must reflect what the Church believes (*lex credendi*). Monsignor Hughes insists that the 1549 Prayer Book made it clear that a new religion was being imposed:

This prayer book of 1549 was as clear a sign as a man might desire that a doctrinal revolution was intended and that it was, indeed, already in progress. Once these new sacramental rites, for example, had become the habit of the English people the substance of the doctrinal reformation, victorious now in northern Europe, would have transformed England also. All but insensibly, as the years went by, the beliefs enshrined in the old, and now disused rites, and kept alive by these rites in men's minds and affections; would disappear without the need of any systematic missionary effort to preach them down.[6]

In other words, when for decades the faithful were forced to worship as Protestants they became Protestants. Their faith had been destroyed by liturgical reform.

The Reform of St. Pius V

History thus makes clear to us the distinction between true and false liturgical reform. The essence of a true liturgical reform is that it contains no drastic revision of the liturgical traditions that have been handed down. Its most evident characteristic is fidelity to these traditions, as was the case with the reform of St. Gregory the Great. This is equally true of the reform of St. Pius V in 1570 which was the response of Rome to the Protestant liturgical revolution. Father Fortescue explains that: "The Council of Trent (1545- 1563), in opposition to the anarchy of these new services, wished the Roman Mass to be celebrated uniformly everywhere." [7] In its eighteenth session the Council appointed a commission to examine the Missal, to revise it and to restore it "according to the custom and rite of the Holy Fathers", using for that purpose the best manuscripts and other documents. "They accomplished their task very well," comments Father Fortescue. "On 14th July, 1570, the Pope published the reformed Missal with the *Bull Quo Primum*. Its title was: *Missale Romanum ex decreto ss. Concilii Tridentini restitutum.*" [8]

Up to the time of St. Pius V the history of the Roman rite had been one of natural and gradual development. It was regulated not by written legislation but by customary usage. The Bull *Quo Primum* was the first papal legislation governing the celebration of Mass. Father David Knowles, Britain's most distinguished Catholic scholar until his death in 1974, and who refused to celebrate the Mass of Pope Paul VI, explained that:

The Missal of 1570 was indeed the result of instructions given at Trent, but it was, in fact, as regards the Ordinary, Canon, Proper of the time and much else a replica of the Roman Missal of 1474, which in its turn repeated in all essentials the practice of the Roman Church of the epoch of Innocent III, which itself derived from the usage of Gregory the Great and his successors in the seventh century. In short, the Missal of 1570 was in essentials the usage of the mainstream of medieval European Liturgy which included England and its rites.[9]

There have been revisions since the reform of St. Pius V but, as Father Fortescue explains, up to his time (1917) these had been intended to keep the Missal in line with the reform of 1570. Father Fortescue deals with all the subsequent revisions up to his time in detail and concludes that:

Since the Council of Trent the history of the Mass is hardly anything but the composition and approval of new Masses. The scheme and all the fundamental parts remain the same. No one has thought of touching the venerable liturgy of the Roman Mass, except by adding to it new propers.[10]

The Reforms of Pius XI I did not affect the text of the Mass but were concerned with the Holy Week services. But any objective assessment of his reforms will find that they were enacted "according to the custom and rite of the Holy Fathers", and with a profound respect for tradition. At the conclusion of his pontificate in 1958 it could still be said, as Father Fortescue had said in 1917:

Our Mass goes back, without essential change, to the age when it first developed out of the oldest liturgy of all. It is still redolent of that liturgy, of the days when Caesar ruled the world and thought he could stamp out the Faith of Christ, when our fathers met together before dawn and sang a hymn to Christ as to a God... there is not in Christendom another rite so venerable as ours.[11]

The beauty, the worth, the perfection of the Roman liturgy of the mass, so universally acknowledged and admired, was described by Fr. Faber as "the most beautiful thing this side of heaven." He continues:

It came forth out of the grand mind of the Church, and lifted us out of earth and out of self, and wrapped us round in a cloud of mystical sweetness and the sublimities of a more than angelic liturgy, and purified us almost without ourselves, and charmed us with celestial charming, so that our very senses seem to find vision, hearing fragrance, taste and touch beyond what earth can give.[12]

The Mass of St. Pius V, "the most beautiful thing this side of heaven" can truly be described as the birthright of every Catholic of the Roman Rite, a treasure to be handed on unchanged in any significant respect from generation unto generation-but then came Vatican II.

The Post- Vatican II Reform-True or False?

This brings me to the liturgical reform that followed the Second Vatican Council, and the question that I wish to put is whether it is a true reform in the Catholic tradition of the reforms of St. Gregory the Great and St. Pius V, or is it a false reform, better termed a revolution, in the tradition of the sixteenth century Protestant Reformers? Note carefully that I have not referred to the reform mandated by the Second Vatican Council, but the reform that followed the Council. Monsignor Klaus Gamber assures us that:

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.[13]

In case any of you are not familiar with the writings of the late Msgr. Klaus Gamber he is one of the greatest liturgists of this century. He was among the founders of the Liturgical Institute of Ratisbonne in 1957, and its director until his death on 2 June 1989 at the age of seventy. Cardinal Ratzinger described him as "the one scholar who, among the army of pseudo-liturgists, truly represents the liturgical thinking of the centre of the Church." [14]

His book, *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy*, was published in English in 1993. I will cite just a few of the denunciations it contains of the reform fabricated by the pseudo-liturgists which would "not have been endorsed by the majority of the Council Fathers". The drastic curtailment of solemnity in the liturgy, he writes, means that Catholics "are now breathing the thin air of Calvinistic sterility." [15]

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.[16]

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 traditional liturgical texts and thus make the celebration of the "Tridentine Mass" impossible - because it no longer reflected the new spirit moving through the Church? [17]

Msgr. Gamber sums up the effect of the postconciliar reform in one devastating sentence: "At this critical juncture, the traditional Roman rite, more than one thousand years old, has been destroyed." [18] Is he exaggerating? Not at all. His

claim is endorsed from the opposite end of the liturgical spectrum by Father Joseph Gelineau, SJ, described by Archbishop Bugnini, great architect of the liturgical revolution, as one of the "great masters of the international liturgical world". [19] The great master comments, with commendable honesty and no sign of regret:

Let those who like myself have known and sung a Latin-Gregorian High Mass remember it if they can. Let them compare it with the Mass that we now have. Not only the words, the melodies, and some of the gestures are different. To tell the truth it is a different liturgy of the Mass. This needs to be said without ambiguity: the Roman Rite as we knew it no longer exists. It has been destroyed (il est detruit).[20]

Comment is hardly necessary. Msgr. Gamber makes precisely the same point when he writes:

Every liturgical rite constitutes an organically developed, homogeneous unit. To change any of its essential elements is synonymous with the destruction of the rite in its entirety.[21]

I will quote just one more authority, His Eminence Josef Cardinal Ratzinger:

J. A. Jungmann, one of the truly great liturgists of our time, defined the liturgy of his day, such as it could be understood in the light of historical research, as a "liturgy which is the fruit of development" ...What happened after the Council was something else entirely: in the place of the 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.[22]

And again:

I am convinced that the crisis in the Church that we are experiencing today is to a large extent due to the disintegration of the liturgy ... in that it is a matter of indifference whether or not God exists and whether or not he speaks to us and hears us. But when the community of faith, the worldwide unity of the Church and her history, and the mystery of the living Christ are no longer visible in the liturgy, where else, then, is the Church to become visible in her spiritual essence? Then the community is celebrating only itself, an activity that is utterly fruitless.[23]

There is no time available for me to demonstrate by a close examination of the new rite of Mass, that the criticisms that I have cited are based on fact, and that the Roman Rite has indeed been destroyed. I have provided all the documentation needed to prove this in the 673 pages of my book Pope Paul's New Mass. Suffice it to say, paraphrasing the Catholic Bishops of the Province of Westminster in 1898, that prayers and ceremonies in previous use have been subtracted, and that the traditional rite has been remodeled in a most drastic manner for the first time in the liturgical history of East and West with the exception of the Protestant Reformation. To quote Msgr. Gamber once more:

The liturgical reform, welcomed with so much idealism and hope by many priests 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 the Church and of Catholic life, we are now witnessing a dismantling of the traditional values and piety on which our faith rests. Instead of the fruitful renewal of the liturgy, what we see is a destruction of the forms of the Mass which had developed organically during the course of many centuries." [24]

The reaction of Father David Knowles to the 1970 Missal is almost brutal in its frankness: "I think future generations will wonder how the Church could make such a sudden massacre of one of the great art forms of the world-the Latin Roman Liturgy of word and music." [25] Father Knowles, who refused to celebrate the New Mass, provides the answer to his own question: "It was a great accidental disaster that the original liturgical movement was first of all in the 1950s

allowed to get into the hands of rabid liturgical purists, and then since 1963 exploited by those who used liturgical scholarship as a blind for desacralising and de-Catholicising the liturgy."[26]

Father Knowles attribution of the "de-Catholicising the liturgy" to a deviant liturgical movement is echoed by Cardinal Ratzinger:

It seems to me that as early as the nineteen fifties, and certainly after the Council, the latent and, likewise, the patent risks in the Liturgical Movement constituted a great temptation, a serious danger for the Church. After the Council there was a new situation, because the liturgists had acquired de facto authority; all the time, the authority of the Church was accorded less recognition, and it was now the expert who became the authority. This transfer of authority to the experts transformed everything, and these experts in turn were the victims of an exegesis profoundly influenced by the opinions of Protestantism, that is to say, the New Testament was against the category of sacredness, against cult and priesthood, and thus at the opposite pole to the great tradition, above all that of the Council of Trent p. 147).

A Right to the Rite?

This brings us to the concluding section of my talk. I have described the Mass of St. Pius V as the birthright of every Catholic of the Roman Rite, and if this assertion is accepted it means that no one, the Pope included, was entitled to deprive us of this birthright, to destroy it. This is a claim that lies at the heart of the radical incompatibility between conservative and traditional Catholics. "Birthright!" exclaim the conservatives, "What birthright?" Only one man in the Church has rights-the Pope, the Bishop of Rome, the Vicar of Christ. He is entitled to change the liturgy in any way he wishes and the other members of the Church, from cardinals to laymen, have a duty to accept the changes with docility. Indeed, if they are true Catholics, loyal Catholics, they will not simply accept these changes but welcome them."

Let me quote an alternative opinion:

After the Second Vatican Council, the impression arose that the pope really could do anything in liturgical matters, especially if he were acting on the mandate of an ecumenical council. Eventually, the idea of the givenness of the liturgy, the fact that one cannot do with it what one will, faded from the public consciousness of the West. In fact, the First Vatican Council had in no way defined the pope as an absolute monarch. On the contrary, it presented him as the guarantor of obedience to the revealed Word. The pope's authority is bound to the Tradition of faith, and that also applies to the liturgy. It is not "manufactured" by the authorities. Even the pope can only be a humble servant of its lawful development and abiding integrity and identity. ...The authority of the pope is not unlimited; it is at the service of the Sacred Tradition.

This the opinion of Cardinal Ratzinger. Msgr. Gamber questions the right of a pope to abolish the traditional Mass:

Since there is no document that specifically assigns to the Apostolic See the authority to change, let alone abolish the traditional liturgical rite; and since, furthermore, it can be shown that not a single predecessor of Pope Paul VI has ever introduced major changes into the Roman liturgy, the assertion that the Holy see has the authority to change the liturgical rite would appear to be debatable to say the least.[27]

The fact that the papal power of jurisdiction has its limitation in no way contradicts the fact that it is truly awesome. The papal prerogatives are listed in detail in two columns of the Catholic Encyclopedia-to give just one example:

He has full authority to interpret, alter, and abrogate both his own laws and those established by his predecessors. He has the same plenitude of power as they enjoyed and stands in the same relation to their laws as those which he himself has decreed.[28]

Does this mean that to speak of the birthright of the faithful in liturgical matters is meaningless? Does only one right exist, that of the Pope to command the faithful to worship in the manner which he sees fit to accord them? In other words, which should take precedence—the will of the legislator or the good of those for whom he is legislating? Where there is a question of rights, it is the rights of the subject rather than those of the legislator that must take precedence. St. Thomas accepts the classical definition of justice as rendering to each one what is his right or due, and explains that a man is said to be just because he respects the rights of others.[29] Every legislator in Church and State has an absolute obligation to rule justly, and this obligation is not simply binding upon the Pope, but it is clear that in his capacity as the Vicar, the earthly representative of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the source of all justice, this obligation binds the Pope more than any other ruler. He is the supreme shepherd charged with guiding his flock to heaven, and if, through harsh or unjust treatment on his part, even one of them should be driven from the fold he would bear a heavy responsibility. He has the duty to emulate his divine master and guide his flock to the green pastures and clear refreshing waters to which Psalm 22 refers.

What appears to be the virtually unlimited juridical authority possessed by the Pope is restricted by moral considerations. What is legally valid is not necessarily morally licit. An evident example of legally valid but morally illicit papal legislation was the all too frequent practice of nepotism in which benefices established for the salvation of souls were used by popes as no more than a source of income for their relations. Karl Rahner, who was most certainly not a traditional Catholic, wrote an interesting study in 1965 on the distinction between legally valid but morally illicit papal legislation, and used the liturgy to illustrate his thesis. The Pope, he explained, is legally entitled to impose the Roman rite upon the eastern rites, but to do so would be a totally immoral act which would inevitably result in a schism for which the Pope would be responsible.[30]

During the debate on infallibility during the first Vatican Council fears were expressed that the Pope was to be given absolute or arbitrary power. It was made clear that this was not to be the case, and that the plenitude of papal power (*plenitudo potestatis*) was subject to a number of limitations, the most important of which is the obligation to use it only to build up the Mystical Body:

Therefore Peter has as much power as the Lord has given him not for the destruction, but for the building up of the Body of Christ, that is, the Church.[31]

I have already cited the article in Encyclopedia listing the jurisdiction possessed by the Pope. then it states: the Catholic awesome powers of But after listing them it states:

Though the power of the pope, as we have described it, is very great, it does not follow that it is arbitrary and unrestricted. "The Pope," as cardinal Hergenrother well says, "is circumscribed by the consciousness of the necessity of making a righteous and beneficent use of the duties attached to his privileges ...He is also circumscribed by the spirit and practice of the Church, by the respect due to General Councils and to ancient statutes and customs, by the rights of bishops, by his relation with civil powers, by the traditional mild tone of government indicated by the aim of the institution of the papacy—to 'feed'..."[32]

In his book *L'Eglise du Verbe Incarne* (The Church and the Word incarnate), Cardinal Journet quotes Cajetan as follows:

All this power is given to the Pope for no other end than the service of the Church. She is greater than he, not in authority but in worth and nobility. The papacy is for the Church, not the Church for the papacy: the end is always a nobler thing than the means. Hence the Pope calls himself the "Servant of the servants of God" and, so doing, he stands in the truth, *et sic est in veritate*.[33]

Liturgical laws, although coming within the category of ecclesiastical law, must be governed by the same principles by which any human law can be judged. The prayers in the Mass and the rubrics governing its celebration are, as has been

explained, generally the codification of practices already established by custom. "Liturgies are not made, they grow in the devotion of centuries," notes Professor Owen Chadwick in his history of the Reformation.[34]

St. Thomas defines a law as "An ordinance of reason for the common good, made by him who has care of the community, and promulgated." [35] The consensus of Catholic authorities agrees with St. Thomas in his exposition of the nature of human law, namely, that whether civil or ecclesiastical it is an act of public authority having the right to demand obedience, but which itself must conform to the demands of reason and be seen to have an effect that is both good and to the benefit to those for whom it is intended. St. Thomas, followed by other authorities, warns that any change in existing legislation must be made only with extreme caution, particularly where it might involve changes in any long-standing customs. In support of this contention he cites the Decretals: "It is absurd, and a detestable shame, that we should suffer those traditions to be changed which we have received from

the fathers of old." [36] He adds that the very fact of changing a law, even for a better one, "is of itself prejudicial to the common good: because custom avails much for the observance of laws, seeing that what is done contrary to general custom even in slight matters is looked upon as grave." [37]

In discussing the question of the mutation of laws, St. Thomas lays down the premise that there are two remote reasons which can lead to a just change in the laws. The first resides in the nature of man who, being a rational being, is gradually led by his reason from what is less perfect to what is more perfect. [38] The second reason must be found in the actions which are being subjected to the regulation of law, and which can change according to the various circumstances in which men find themselves and in which they must work. Every change in law must be determined by an evident necessity of the common good since law is rightly changed only insofar as this change manifestly contributes to the welfare of the community. [39] The principle was echoed in the Liturgy Constitution of the Second Vatican Council which commanded that "there must be no innovations unless the good of the Church genuinely and certainly requires them" (Article 23). I would challenge anyone to specify a single change made to the Mass of St. Pius V that was genuinely and certainly required by the good of the Church. Did the good of the Church genuinely and certainly require that the *Judica me*, the sublime Offertory Prayers, or the Last Gospel should be abolished?

Even where a change in the law carries an evident benefit it will be accompanied by some harm to the common good as any change in the law abandons a custom, and custom is always a great help and support in the observance of laws. Any change in an individual law diminishes the force and respect paid to law because a custom is taken away. Reference has already been made to the importance attached by St. Thomas Aquinas to maintaining existing customs unless changing them is demanded by some overwhelming necessity. With profound psychological insight he adds that this is true even when the innovations contrary to custom are minor ones, for, even though minor in themselves, they may appear important in the common estimation. From this he draws a general conclusion: law must never be changed unless it is certain that the common good will find in the modification at least adequate compensation for the harm done by way of derogating a Custom. [40]

Suarez, another great authority, insists that for his law to be considered reasonable, a legislator must not simply refrain from demanding something his subjects will find impossible to carry out, but that the law must not even be too difficult, distressing or disagreeable, taking account of human frailty. On no account should it contradict any reasonable custom because custom is a kind of "second nature" and what it finds abhorrent "is considered to be morally impossible." He also lays great stress on the necessity for laws to be permanent-not in the sense that they can never be abrogated, but that this shall only occur if changing circumstances make it quite clear that they are no longer just. If legislation is to work in the common interest it must aim at stability and uniformity within the community. [41]

Where there is the least doubt that the benefits of a change in the laws are likely to outweigh considerably the harm that will result from a change of custom, then it is better to conserve the existing legislation rather than change it. Being the accepted practice, it has, so to speak, the right of possession and, in a case of doubt, it is the right of possession which is the stronger.

The history of the various Christian denominations is replete with instances of disruption and even schisms concerning changes in established customs, changes which many modern commentators might regard as trivial matters. The secession of the Old Believers from the Russian Orthodox Church is a typical example.^[42] What such incidents prove is the accuracy of St. Thomas's insight into the harmful effects of changing the status quo without overwhelming reasons for doing so.

Salus animarum suprema est lex - "The good of souls is the supreme law". It is a law which binds all Christians and binds above all the Holy Father who, we must hope, wishes to be bound by it. Did he not decree in his Apostolic Constitution *Ecclesia Dei* that by virtue of his apostolic authority "respect must everywhere be shown for the feelings of all those who are attached to the Latin liturgical tradition"? We have a right to what is essential for the good of our souls, and we therefore have a right to the traditional Mass of the Roman rite, "the most beautiful thing this side of heaven." Let me conclude by quoting Msgr. Gamber once more:

In the final analysis, this means that in the future the traditional rite of Mass must be retained in the Roman Catholic Church ... as the primary liturgical form for the celebration of 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 never-ending change.^[43]

Some of the sources referred to in the notes have been abbreviated as follows:

ESR F. Clark, *Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Reformation* (Devon, 1980).
RIE P. Hughes, *The Reformation in England*, 3 volumes (London, 1950).
RRL K. Gamber, *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy* (New York, 1993).
ST *Summa Theologica*.
TM A. Fortescue, *The Mass: A Study of the Roman Liturgy* (London, 1917).

FOOTNOTES

[1] Michael Davies, *The Wisdom of Adrian Fortescue* (Roman Catholic Books, 1999). See Part II, Chapter I, for Father Fortescue's magisterial exposition of the nature of Catholic liturgy.

[2] A. Fortescue, *The Mass: A Study of the Roman Liturgy* (London, 1917), p. 173, referred to as TM in subsequent footnotes.^[3]
P. Hughes, *The Reformation in England*, vol. II, (London, 1950), p. 158. RIE in subsequent footnotes.

[4] TM, pp. 205-6.

[5] The Cardinal Archbishop and Bishops of the Province of Westminster, *A Vindication of the Bull "Apostolicae Curiae"* (London, 1898). p. 42.^[6] RIE, vol. II, p. 111.

[7] TM, p. 206.

[8] TM, pp. 206-7.

[9] *The Tablet*, 24 July 1971, p. 724. 13^[10] TM, p. 211.

[11] TM, P. 213.

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy*, K. Gamber (Roman Catholic Books, New York 1993), p. 61, referred to subsequent notes as RRL.^[14]
RRL, p. xiii.

[15] RRL, P. 5.

[16] RRL, p. 109.

[17] RRL, p.100.^[18] RRL, p. 99.

[19] A. Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy: 1948-1975* (Collegeville, Minnesota, 1990), p. 221.

[20] J. Gelineau, *Demain la liturgie* (Paris, 1976), pp. 9-10.

[21] RRL, pp. 30-31.

[22] Preface to the French edition of *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy* by Msgr. Klaus Gamber. [23] Joseph Ratzinger, *Milestones* (Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1998), pp. 148-149. [24] RRL, p. 9.

[25] A. Morly, *David Knowles A Memoir* (Darton, Longman, & Todd, London, 1979), p. 113.

[26] *Ibid.*

[27] RRL, p. 39.

[28] *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. XII (New York, 1911), p. 269.

[29] ST, II, II, Q. 58, art. 1.

[30] K. Rahner, *Studies in Modern Theology* (Herder, 1965), pp. 394-5.

[31] A statement made by Bishop D'Avanzo of Carli, a spokesman for the Deputation of the Faith. J. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* (Paris, 1857-1927), vol. 52, p. 715.

[32] *Catholic Encyclopedia*, op. cit. pp. 269-270,

[33] C. Journet, *The Church of the Word Incarnate* (London, 1955), pp. 423-4.

[34] O. Chadwick, *The Reformation* (London, 1972), p. 119.

[35] ST, II, I, Q. 90, art. 4.

[36] ST, II, I, Q. 97, art. 2. [37] *Ibid.*

[38] *Ibid.*, art. 1.

[39] *Ibid.* art 2. [40] *Ibid.*

[41] *De Legibus*, t.5 & 6.

[42] In the 17th century the Patriarch Nikon of Moscow changed the spelling of the name of Jesus and how many fingers were to be joined when making the sign of the cross. A schism resulted and about 12 million Old Believers (Raskolniki) left the Russian Church. [43] RRL, p.114