

The Once and Future Roman Rite

Related books by Peter Kwasniewski

Resurgent in the Midst of Crisis

Noble Beauty, Transcendent Holiness

Tradition and Sanity

Reclaiming Our Roman Catholic Birthright

The Holy Bread of Eternal Life

Ministers of Christ

True Obedience in the Church

The Road from Hyperpapalism to Catholicism

Related books edited by Peter Kwasniewski

Are Canonizations Infallible?

From Benedict's Peace to Francis's War

Newman on Worship, Reverence, and Ritual

And Rightly So: Selected Letters and Articles of Neil McCaffrey

The Once and Future Roman Rite

Returning to the Traditional Latin Liturgy after
Seventy Years of Exile

Peter A. Kwasniewski

Foreword by Martin Mosebach

TAN Books
Gastonia, North Carolina

The Once and Future Roman Rite: Returning to the Traditional Latin Liturgy after Seventy Years of Exile © 2022 Peter A. Kwasniewski. All rights reserved.

With the exception of short excerpts used in critical review, no part of this work may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in any form whatsoever, without the prior written permission of the publisher. Creation, exploitation and distribution of any unauthorized editions of this work, in any format in existence now or in the future—including but not limited to text, audio, and video—is prohibited without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Excerpts from the English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for use in the United States of America © 1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Used with permission.

Scripture quotations are taken from the Douay Rheims Bible, in the public domain, as well as the American Literary Version of the Bible (based on the American Standard Version), copyright © 2016 Writ Press, Inc. in the United States of America. Used with permission.

Cover design by Michael Schrauzer

Cover image: Frontispiece to a 1629 edition of the *Missale Romanum*, published by Cornelius ab Egmond in Cologne; print by Simon van de Passe, after design of the Monogrammist DVB; public domain image from the Rijksstudio of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam

Library of Congress Control Number: 2022939270

ISBN: 978-1-5051-2662-4

Kindle ISBN: 978-1-5051-2663-1

ePUB ISBN: 978-1-5051-2664-8

Published in the United States by

TAN Books

PO Box 269

Gastonia, NC 28053

www.TANBooks.com

Dedicated to all priests who offer the Holy Sacrifice
in communion with the Church of all times
adhering to the Tradition of all ages
yesterday, today, and forever

sacerdotes in aeternum

pro ecclesia et

pro Deo





Quoniam quae perfecisti destruxerunt: iustus autem quid fecit?

For that which Thou hast perfected, they have destroyed; but what has the just man done?

—Psalm 10:4

The pope is not an absolute monarch whose will is law; rather, he is the guardian of the authentic Tradition and, thereby, the premier guarantor of obedience. . . . His rule is not that of arbitrary power, but that of obedience in faith. That is why, with respect to the Liturgy, he has the task of a gardener, not that of a technician who builds new machines and throws the old ones on the junk-pile.

—Joseph Ratzinger

Contents

<i>Publisher's Note</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Foreword by Martin Mosebach</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>xix</i>
<i>Abbreviations and Conventions</i>	<i>xxix</i>
1 Tradition as Ultimate Norm	1
2 The Laws of Organic Development and the Rupture of 1969	33
3 Hyperpapalism and Liturgical Mutation	79
4 Revisiting Paul VI's <i>Apologia</i> for the New Mass	109
5 Two "Forms": Liturgical Fact or Canonical Fiat?	145
6 How Much Can the Pope Change Our Rites, and Why Would He?	179
7 Growth or Corruption? Catholic versus Protestant-Modernist Models	197
8 The Roman Canon: Pillar and Ground of the Roman Rite	217
9 The Displacement of the <i>Mysterium Fidei</i>	263
10 Byzantine, Tridentine, Montinian: Two Brothers and a Stranger	279
11 Rescued from the Memory Hole	313
12 The Once and Future Roman Rite	333
<i>Epilogue: Oppositions</i>	<i>377</i>
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>379</i>
<i>Appendix: Pope Paul VI on the Liturgical Reform</i>	<i>381</i>
<i>Sources of Epigraphs</i>	<i>399</i>

<i>Sources of Artwork</i>	401
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	403
<i>Index</i>	413
<i>About the Author</i>	437

Publisher's Note

Since our founding in 1967, TAN Books has published works that preserve and promote the spiritual, theological, and liturgical traditions of Holy Mother Church. Our uncompromising mission is to be the publisher you can trust with your faith and to help people become saints. We have published over one thousand titles on traditional devotions, Church doctrine, Church history, the lives of the saints, catechesis, Sacred Scripture, Thomistic theology, and much more. Yet, of them all, our works on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass—our greatest treasure—are at the heart of TAN Books.

Everything flows from the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, most especially the Holy Eucharist, the “font and apex of our faith,” as defined by the Second Vatican Council itself. In an age of secularism, relativism, ecclesiastical confusion, and growing disbelief in the Real Presence, Catholics must better grasp the roots of our present liturgical crisis. The following work by Dr. Peter Kwasniewski, *The Once and Future Roman Rite*—his *magnum opus* and the fruit of over twenty-five years of research—sheds light on the beauty of the traditional Latin liturgy as practiced by the Church in an unbroken line from early centuries through Pope Pius V and down to our own time, and shows how distinctly it differs from the new liturgy Pope Paul VI promulgated in 1969.

The aim throughout this work has been to articulate a position that is of maximum consistency with Catholic tradition, history, and teaching and which is intellectually honest, even when it leads to conclusions that run against the grain of current thought. TAN Books, in its loyalty to the Church, only publishes books consistent with Church teaching, and has taken measures to ensure that what is opinion and what is dogma are clearly distinguished and stated as such for the reader's ease. The author herein published is, and intends to be, in all of his works, acts, and writings,

a loyal son of the Church, and writes as such. The author holds, as do all Catholics, that the Novus Ordo is a valid Mass, in which the Body and Blood of Christ are confectioned. The opinions expressed in this book are the author's own and should not be equated with the views of TAN Books.

It is our sincere prayer that those who read this book will find their understanding of the Roman Rite deepened, will fall ever more in love with Christ and His Church through a greater love for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and will grow in holiness and love of God in their daily pursuit of what the Mass points to: union with God forever in heaven.

Foreword

Few things are total and absolute failures. On this earth, what is right and wrong, good and evil, ugly and beautiful rarely tends to appear unalloyed. Usually, contradictions are mixed up with each other; the discussion revolves around an endless “on the one hand—on the other.” Therefore, it makes me uneasy that, for the past fifty years, try as I may, there is nothing that I can find to be praised in Paul VI’s reform of the Roman rite’s Mass as engineered by Archbishop Bugnini, that master of the *tabula rasa*, not to forget the innumerable unauthorized inventors of liturgy throughout the world. To be fully, intellectually honest, I can’t think of anything, even though I distrust myself and in principle can accept as possible that in a matter so personally painful, others may be proven right against me.

At the same time, in a certain way, I am also grateful for Paul VI’s gigantic disaster. During the grand enterprise of demolition after 1968, which ruined the structure of the Church that had been preserved up till then through so many dangers—as churches and convents emptied, as altars were turned around and guitars made their appearance in the Mass, and as priests, to the extent that they hadn’t abandoned their office, wallowed in liturgical inventions—I had distanced myself greatly from any practice of religion. When, a few years later, I had returned, I was astonished, confronted with the work of destruction accomplished in the meantime.

My membership in the Catholic Church derives from my mother, a native of Cologne. Cologne was once quintessentially Catholic and was called “Holy Cologne” because of its twelve Romanesque churches, all of which have the status of a cathedral and which many connoisseurs view as more important than Cologne Cathedral itself. But as usual in the case of such closed milieus, there was no escaping the Church, especially its temporal authority. Everything belonged to the Church, the Church was involved in all affairs of the city—that wasn’t always pleasant. Many people kept a

skeptical distance from the Church, above all, the men. In this respect, the Church in Cologne had something in common with Latin culture: church was a woman's affair. If they went to Mass at all, many men came at the consecration and left after the Pater Noster. Too much involvement in church matters was perceived as unmanly. The oldish bachelors who rummaged around in the sacristy were called "holy water frogs."

That was the atmosphere in which I grew up. If the liturgical catastrophe hadn't befallen the Church and the world—for the traditional liturgy always kept its focus on the whole world, or at least on its salvation—in the best case, I would far more likely have remained at a benevolent distance from the Church. At least for me, that sad law has been proved once again, that a good thing must first be mortally threatened in order for its true value to be once more recognized. So, the years of my return to the Church were characterized more and more by the effort to get to know better that which had been lost.

Let me be very specific. In Frankfurt, after a long struggle with a hostile bishop, we managed to have a Mass in the traditional rite celebrated once a month and, later, once a week on workdays, in an ugly chapel in a hotel. (The thousand-year-old churches of my native city were, of course, out of the question.) But then we had to learn from scratch how to serve at the altar. The celebrants appointed by the bishop were likewise uncertain. It soon emerged that the laymen themselves had to find out how to celebrate a Mass *rite et recte* in order to assist the priest. Now I myself had to become a "holy water frog" if a regular celebration was to happen. Either I served at the altar or there was no altar server. My inherited notion of what was compatible with the dignity of a grown man had to be forgotten without further ado. But in so doing, my life experienced an almost limitless enrichment!

A short manual for sacristans with detailed instructions for the liturgy called "Müller-Frei" was very helpful. But it was like the Prussian drill regulations transposed to the liturgy. The little book didn't spend any time on the justification and reinforcement of the individual rubrics. Whoever wanted to ridicule the set of rules for the old liturgy as "rubricism" would find rewarding material in "Müller-Frei." One thing became clear to me: the liturgical catastrophe wasn't just the work of presumptuous prelates

who threw together with suspicious haste a protestantizing worship service. Rather, it was preceded by a lack of understanding that had grown up over many decades. Even pious priests often couldn't answer questions about liturgical details. But what a joy it was to discover that such answers did exist and that each one opened a more profound insight into the fundamental coherence of the whole!

And I have never ceased to learn. After nearly forty years of involvement with the traditional Latin liturgy, no year passes in which I do not discover something important, the existence of which I had never suspected—all this, after I had returned to the pews and had left serving at the altar to a crowd of young altar boys all of whom are much more competent than I ever was. That is the great error to which Roman prelates succumb when they imagine that they can now suppress the traditional Roman rite. Anyone, from the moment he has obtained a real understanding of this liturgy, will always remain aware of the many defects of the new rite. There is no going back to a time before this perception. But no one should get into a debate over the “validity” of the new rite. It is valid. Precisely because it is valid (at least when celebrated correctly according to the liturgical books), its obscuring of the divine sacrifice is all the more ignominious.

The struggle for the restoration of the Roman Church's traditional liturgy has several aspects: theological, because it involves preserving the character of the Holy Mass as a sacrifice; political, because the hierarchical structure of the Church is thereby upheld; and aesthetic, because the conviction is thereby defended that the religion of the divine Incarnation demands an expression accessible to the senses. It is a spiritual struggle—but if it only involved the strength and weight of the arguments, it should have been won long ago. For in the face of the disaster the liturgists have created, the powerful party of the reform has lost the drive to defend its work. It relies now entirely on foolish legal positivism: “the Church has taken another path; the changes are irreversible; it's simply this way now, one must submit.” It does no injustice to the current prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship to summarize his instructions in this manner.

In this liturgical battle, it's not just a matter of defeating a perverse ideology and theology and so, in the end, of prevailing in the clash of arguments.

The Roman liturgy, which we may call “divine” with the same right as the Orthodox—perhaps we should get used to doing so—connects the natural and the supernatural. Its cause will not endure if it does not experience supernatural confirmation. Saints are such a confirmation. The movement for preserving the traditional rite will succeed only if it produces saints. As I write this, I am terrified, but it’s of no use; this insight is nothing other than a spiritual law. In the past, we can absolutely name saintly protectors of the Roman liturgy. At their head is certainly Pope Saint Gregory the Great, who did not at all invent these rites but reverently organized them. His heirs are all those who celebrate the traditional Mass today. We should next remember Saint John Damascene, who fought against the iconoclasm of Constantinople. The twentieth-century reforms not only were accompanied by a new wave of iconoclasm but dared to damage the greatest icon of all: the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Saint John Damascene is, in addition, connected with the “Feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy” celebrated in the Orthodox world on every first Sunday of Lent; this feast can be a model for the Catholic hope for the “restoration of the orthodox liturgy.”

During the Reformation in Germany, England, and France, there certainly were martyrs who stood up and suffered not just generally for the Catholic religion but in particular for the liturgy. We have to seek them out in order to call upon their intercession. The fate of the Ruedesheimer vineyard peasants in the late eighteenth century is moving. They resisted the ban on singing Gregorian chant imposed by the “enlightened” bishop of Mainz, and as a result, they were deported and condemned to lengthy imprisonment. Nobody has taken the trouble to pursue their canonization, but one can be sure that their sacrifice was accepted. Also among their number are the priests in German and Russian concentration camps who celebrated the unabbreviated Holy Mass with a couple of smuggled raisins, were betrayed, and had to pay for it with their lives. Then there’s the stigmatic Saint Padre Pio, who with the bleeding wounds of Christ became an icon himself and thus made apparent in a unique way the sacrificial character of the Mass. He never celebrated the new Mass, having died shortly before its introduction.

Peter Kwasniewski is not just a bulwark of learning but a man of provocative wit. Thus, he has recently proposed to have the United Nations declare the traditional Roman rite to be part of the world's "intangible cultural heritage."¹ In view of the general cultural destruction by the wars of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and the often violent reshaping of the entire world by industry and commerce, the concept of the world's cultural heritage is understandable: preserving certain outstanding buildings, landscapes, and traditions at least temporarily from destruction.² That which has come down to our threatening present day from the past, which belongs to the traditions of a people and which may also be fruitful in the future, should be removed from the raging torrent of change and the "fury of disappearance" of which the philosopher Hegel spoke. In context, violinmaking in Italian Cremona, Indian Yoga, Cuban Rumba, the Zaouli dance of the Ivory Coast, and the building of Pinisi boats in Indonesia have made this list; doesn't the traditional Catholic liturgy fit in here too? Viewed from a non-Christian perspective, definitely yes! The petition for enrollment in this list would be easy to write. According to the procedure of the United Nations, however, it must be a state which takes an interest in the matter. Would the sovereign state of Vatican City be ready to do this? One sets such value on the magnificent old churches: the basilicas of the first Christian millennium, the Gothic cathedrals, the splendid temples of the Baroque, all of which were built to the smallest details according to the rubrics of the old liturgy; thus, these structures are "built liturgy" and are completely incomprehensible outside of the purpose for which they were made.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the French state expropriated the country's churches and it seemed that politics influenced by Freemasonry might prohibit the celebration of the Holy Mass in them. The great French novelist Marcel Proust—baptized a Catholic but living as an agnostic—wrote a moving appeal: "La Mort des Cathedrales."³ If the divine liturgy would be prohibited in the old churches, their architecture would

¹ See Peter Kwasniewski, "The Latin Mass as Intangible Cultural Heritage," *OnePeterFive*, November 24, 2021.

² In fact, at the petitioning of the governments of Greece and Cyprus, UNESCO in 2019 recognized Byzantine chant as part of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity.

³ For an English edition with commentary, see Marcel Proust, *Death Comes for the Cathedrals*, trans. John Pepino (Milwaukee, WI: Wiseblood Books, 2021).

be condemned to death as well. He went so far as to demand that the cathedrals be torn down if no more Holy Masses could take place there, since without the liturgy, they would have lost their soul. Connoisseurs travelled to Bayreuth to experience the operas of Wagner, but every Sunday in the cathedrals, a “show” is performed that is far more important than all the operas of Wagner taken together. Oscar Wilde too was enthusiastic for the qualities of the traditional liturgy: it is the only thing that connects the modern age with ancient Greek culture. The many English intellectuals—Agatha Christie was the least among them—who implored Paul VI not to lay hands on the old liturgy argued in a similar vein.⁴ What they declared is good and just: indeed, this liturgy gave birth to a major part of European culture. Dante, Cervantes, and Mozart participated in it innumerable times and allowed it to inform their spirit as artists. But more important than Oscar Wilde’s pagan antiquity is the amazing continuity with the ancient Jewish temple worship, which lives on in the traditional Roman liturgy and links it to the early history of mankind. Among the many dubious aspects of Paul VI’s reform of the Mass was precisely the removal of many Jewish elements from the liturgy. If *anything* deserves the title “world cultural heritage,” it is the traditional Roman liturgy.

Yet Kwasniewski’s UNESCO proposal is a sardonic joke, not only because he appeals to an entity that is unimaginably removed from any religion, but also because the United Nations nevertheless can muster more understanding for the precious nature of liturgy than the institutions that are charged with protecting it! What this scholar, who has placed his entire life under the sign of the traditional liturgy, knows better than Marcel Proust and Oscar Wilde is that the undeniable beauty and superabundant cultural riches that can be found in the old rites are just external side effects of something that is a mystery for modern aesthetes: the truth. And truth does not need the protection of being housed in a museum but rather demands living witness. The communities dedicated to the old rite have understood this. The pope and his functionaries, on the contrary, with all their arguments (such as they are), don’t even seem to approach this reality.

⁴ For the declaration and its signatories, see Joseph Shaw, ed., *The Case for Liturgical Restoration* (Brooklyn, NY: Angelico Press, 2019), 213–16.

Thus, for decades now, we have been at cross-purposes. In the conflict over liturgy, the power and the truth stand on different sides. Will the abundance of knowledge, of wisdom, of prayer already brought to bear in favor of the truth of divine liturgy one day tip the scales—will the emptiness of power become obvious? Whoever inclines to pessimism in this regard (for, in principle, so many things argue for that) should ask himself another question: Would he be ready, if the Roman enemies of the traditional liturgy permanently prevail, to acquiesce—to give up the struggle and accept Pope Paul's *Novus Ordo*? The author of this book has settled this question as it concerns himself; you will find his answer in these pages.

Martin Mosebach

Frankfurt

March 3, 2022



Preface

“The beginning of wisdom is calling things by their proper name.”

—*Confucius*

The heart of the present book is a series of lectures given and articles penned around the time of the fiftieth anniversary (the term “golden” somehow doesn’t seem fitting) of the issuance and the going-into-effect of the *Novus Ordo Missae*—that is to say, April 3 and November 30 of the year 1969. As the year 2019 came and went, the anniversaries of these two fateful moments afforded occasions for pondering, for lamentation, for renewed commitment to the great work of restoration. My intention had been to publish a book at the end of 2019, but Divine Providence had other plans for that year—and for the two following as well.

As I continued my liturgical studies, I realized more and more the extent to which the problems routinely identified in the *Novus Ordo* had been anticipated, both in theory and in practice, for a good many years prior to the work of the committee known as the *Consilium ad exsequendam Constitutionem de sacra Liturgia* (“*Consilium*” for short) established by Paul VI during the Second Vatican Council. The awareness grew in me that the anniversary book, even if it would focus on the *Novus Ordo*, needed to look beyond fifty years to the seventy-year “Babylonian captivity” we could symbolically date either from 1948, the year the *Pian Commission* was established, to 2018, when an unnecessary but courteous permission was first given by the *Ecclesia Dei Commission* for celebrating the pre-Pacellian Holy Week, *or* from 1951, the year the experimental Easter Vigil was first introduced, to 2021, the year in which it was expected that Rome would give a global wink to those wishing to resume many traditional pre-55 elements. In April of 2021, I wrote the hopeful words: “No express permission is being given, because none is needed for that which is

immemorially sacred and great. Catholics of the Latin rite, in small groups, here and there, are returning to the liturgical temple after seventy years of exile.”¹

And then on July 16, 2021 came the *motu proprio Traditionis Custodes* and its accompanying letter, meant to supplant the *motu proprio Summorum Pontificum* and its accompanying letter, and on December 18 came the *Responsa ad Dubia* of the Congregation for Divine Worship. I compared *TC* and the *Responsa* to the atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.² A war to reduce all traditional Catholics to ideological compliance had commenced. In a flash, the entire landscape changed.

What has changed, however, is not exactly what the pope or the curia might have thought would change. Under the influence of old-school ultramontanism, the fumes of which still linger in the gas tanks of the upper hierarchy, it would have been assumed that once the “grand experiment” of “two forms” of the Roman rite running side by side had been declared a failure, all Catholics would rally round the successor of Peter and his trusty curial band. In reality, the reactions of bishops have been decidedly varied, ranging from lockstep compliance to generous dispensations to Carthusian silence, and what is more, laity and lower clergy have been stirred to a white-hot zeal by what nearly the entire world, including the culturally unsympathetic, interpreted as a gratuitous declaration of war being carried out with a punctilious legalism and a heartless rigidity that reeks of hypocrisy when emanating from the prophets of sheep-scented peripherality, Abrahamic dialogue, and limitless mercy to sinners. In short, the traditionalist movement was given its biggest internal boost and greatest advertising campaign in history, with more Catholics becoming aware of the issues at stake than ever before, with evidence of more widespread curiosity, sympathy, and support, and a rekindling of the fervor that characterized the (then much smaller) traditionalist movement in the most difficult period it faced, circa 1969 to 1984.

What does the present book purport to accomplish? In these pages, I demonstrate that there is, in fact, only one Roman rite—and it is not the

¹ “Ending Seventy Years of Liturgical Exile: The Return of the Pre-55 Holy Week,” *New Liturgical Movement* [NLM], April 19, 2021.

² See my article “A Supreme Moment of Decision, Courtesy of ‘Divine Worship,’” *OnePeterFive*, December 18, 2021.

Novus Ordo, or rather, the Novus Ordo is no true part of it but some other rite entirely. I argue that we have a grave obligation to restore the traditional Latin Mass as the proper and normative Eucharistic rite of the Church of Rome, the *lex orandi* definitively codified by Saint Pius V and received intact by all his successors until the tempestuous twentieth century. In chapter 2, which could be called the core of the work—originally presented as a lecture entitled “Beyond ‘Smells and Bells’: Why We Need the Objective Content of the *Usus Antiquior*”—I argue that the *Novus Ordo Missae* constitutes a rupture with fundamental elements of all liturgies of apostolic derivation, and that, as a consequence, it violates the Church’s solemn obligation to receive, cherish, guard, and pass on the fruits of liturgical development. Since this development is, in fact, a major way in which the Holy Spirit leads the Church into the “fullness of truth” over the ages, as Christ promised, so great a “sin against the Holy Spirit” (as it were) cannot fail to have enormous negative consequences, as indeed the past five decades have verified. Nor is it possible to bridge the abyss between old and new by applying cosmetics or the drapery of elegant clothing, because the problem is on the order of a genetic mutation or damage to internal organs. The profound and permanent solution is to maintain continuity with the living liturgical tradition found in the *usus antiquior*.

Thus expressed, the thesis is hardly novel: I would be a bad traditionalist if I were not following in the footsteps of many predecessors! Decades ago, the German liturgist Klaus Gamber said the new rite could not be called the *ritus Romanus* but had to be called the *ritus modernus*. Michael Davies argued much the same, as did the priests Bryan Houghton, Roger-Thomas Calmel, Raymond Dulac, and Anthony Cekada, among others. One might mention in the same breath the *Short Critical Study*, better known as the “Ottaviani Intervention.” Joseph Ratzinger diplomatically chose a different way of speaking but said many things in his pre-papal years that come very close to Gamber’s formulation.³

³ It was Cardinal Ratzinger’s writings that first awakened my sense of wonder at the mystery of the liturgy, my desire to understand what has happened to it in our era, and my zeal for recovering what has been lost. He set me on a path that began with the “true intentions of Vatican II,” went on to the Reform of the Reform, stopped briefly at “mutual enrichment” of the “two forms,” and ultimately wound its way to an unqualified traditionalism (or restorationism, if you prefer). Of course, in that last leg of the journey, I left Ratzinger behind;

Given that my thesis is by no means unfamiliar, the present book's value consists in furnishing the reader with a convincing, up-to-date presentation of fundamental reasons why traditionalists believe there has been a severe and abidingly harmful rupture in the Latin-rite liturgy of the Catholic Church and why, in response, we advocate an unqualified return to the full tradition. In order to make my case, I show the following:

- that tradition is normative for the Church and for *everyone* in the Church—not excluding, but on the contrary especially for, the pope;
- that it is legitimate to speak of “organic development” in the liturgy, and that we can articulate the laws of said development;
- that with these tools we can distinguish growth from corruption, as Newman did for Christian doctrine (*lex credendi*), and thus protect a divinely-willed tradition (the *lex orandi*) from the tinkering tendencies of antiquarianism and modernism;
- that there are prominent identifying traits to the Roman rite, and indeed to all traditional rites, that are partially or totally absent from the Novus Ordo, thereby estranging it from their company;
- that the liturgical reform as it transpired exhibits traits of nominalism, voluntarism, Protestantism, rationalism, and other distinctly modern errors;
- that the Church is suffering from the influence of a false and dangerous “hyperpapalism” that makes the pope an absolute monarch whose will is law, who may treat the Catholic inheritance as his own possession to modify as he pleases and may compel everyone else to bend to his designs;
- that the defense given of the postconciliar reform by Paul VI proves rather that it should be rejected *tout court*;
- that we ought to recover the Roman rite in its Tridentine plenitude by utilizing editions of liturgical books that do not suffer from the ravages of the ill-considered and temporizing reforms of the mid-1950s and early 1960s;

he seems to have retired at the third station. But I will never cease to be grateful to him for igniting a tremendous enthusiasm in my soul and for accompanying me along the way with his magnificent insights.

- and last but not least, that no special permission is or could ever be required for worshipping God with the Catholic Church’s authentic liturgical rites.

Such are the topics covered in this book. The lectures and articles have been extensively revised for their inclusion herein. An appendix contains the full text of three addresses on liturgical reform delivered by Paul VI (commented on in chapter 4), plus a selection of shorter quotations in the same vein. The book ends with the sources of the epigraphs and a select bibliography.

In discussions of this kind, the impression can easily be given that the sole topic of conversation is the Mass. While it is understandable and fitting that the Mass should be the focal point—it is, after all, the central act of worship of the Catholic Church and the “place” where most Catholics “encounter” Christ and His Church—nevertheless the sacred liturgy comprises far more: not only the other six sacramental rites but also the Divine Office, the blessings, the exorcisms, the pontifical rites, and so forth. *All* of these things were changed as dramatically as (and sometimes even more drastically than) the Mass was. The critique in these pages of the *Novus Ordo Missae* is therefore meant to be, *mutatis mutandis*, a critique of all of the new liturgical books issued by Paul VI, for, being products of the same committees driven by the same agendas, they share the same kinds of weaknesses, even as their traditional counterparts, the distillation of over two millennia of prayer (let us not forget the Jewish antecedents), share similar perfections.

The “liturgical establishment” can offer no substantive argument in favor of the Consilium’s costly fabrications. Their argument from the start was a fist, at first sheathed in velvet, nowadays naked. Their work consisted of exhuming, redacting, and combining bits and pieces of liturgical history and calling it “restoration.” When the work was finished, its enforcers spoke dishonestly about how it maintained continuity with the past, how nothing of importance had been lost, how all that was valuable had been retained—and, what is more, improved!⁴ Did they expect their colossal imposture to remain

⁴ For numerous examples of such claims and a data-driven refutation, see Matthew Hazell, “All the Elements of the Roman Rite? Mythbusting, Part II,” *NLM*, October 1, 2021. See also my articles “O, What a Tangled Web...”: Thirty-Three Falsehoods in the CDW’s *Responsa*

forever undetected? Nothing escapes the watchful eye of Christ; those who seek to manipulate His Church will be brought to justice.

The responsibility for the rupture from tradition rests squarely on the shoulders of those who intended the new thing, designed it, and executed it. More than fifty years after the novel rites were formally introduced, we're like fish swimming in contaminated waters we ourselves did not pollute. Slowly, step by step, the faults have to be undone, one missal, one priest, one altar, one Mass at a time. Paul VI thought he could abolish the traditional Mass with a stroke of the papal pen. Time has proved the vanity of his ambition. All over the world, in every country, the Mass of the Ages is rising again. Ironically, it is the untamable rapid-fire internet that has powered the spread of a movement to restore a tradition that long predates the technology of the printing press, let alone electric or electronic machinery. In this convergence of the very old and the very new, there is both pathos and humor. The divine, the sacred, the holy, cannot be buried, cannot be banished, cannot be bartered away. The voice of the Church at prayer cannot be silenced. It will, in due time, reemerge, erupt anew, wherever it may have been suppressed. We are just beginning to see the Catholic renaissance, even while the rest of the modern Western world rushes at a mad pace to populate the circles of hell.

Catholics in search of tradition have for many decades now favored a return to the 1962 *Missale Romanum* and its related liturgical books, prior to the landslide of change that followed the Council. Yet these liturgical books fall squarely *within* a period of accelerating mutation that already bit hard into the substance of the Tridentine inheritance: the new Easter Vigil of 1951, the new Holy Week of 1955, the new code of rubrics of 1960, and so forth. All of these were interim projects preparing for the "total reconstruction" or *instauratio magna* (to use a phrase from the philosopher Francis Bacon) that took place in the decade following *Sacrosanctum Concilium* of 1963. In a period of chaos, the Missal of 1962 has been a "rock of stability," as Michael Davies once called it, but it is also an island on which one cannot camp out permanently.

ad Dubia," *OnePeterFive*, January 5, 2022, and "The Outrageous Propaganda of Archbishop Roche," *Rorate Caeli*, January 22, 2022.

When, exactly, did a chaste love of gentle reform become an unbridled passion for novelty? Some put the blame on Pius X for his major modifications to the course of psalms prayed by the Roman Church from the earliest centuries. Others would single out Pius XII for throwing his weight behind a commission of liturgical reform that gave Annibale Bugnini his first Vatican position and gave the world a mutilated Holy Week, its quondam grandeur shattered by incoherence. Still others point the finger at John XXIII for his modification of the Roman Canon and for his naïveté in summoning an ecumenical council crowded with blinking bishops and progressive propagandists. Most, however, would squarely name Paul VI the destroyer par excellence who could not rest until he had seen the inheritance of millennia dismantled and rebuilt in modern fashion. Do we not see, all along, a papal predilection to overreach, to indulge a monarchical Petrine power of *remaking* the Church's worship, when, as most of papal history shows, the popes have rather been its grateful recipients, vigilant defenders, and reverent adorners? Should not the popes, above all, see themselves as servants of the great patrimony that has been handed down to them, rather than judges of its supposed defects and manufacturers of its latest model? Is it too much to ask that they be "guardians of tradition"?

The true believers in the "advances and successes" of the liturgical reform are mostly rather elderly now. They have been sitting on top of the ecclesiastical world for so long that they have found it hard to pay attention to traditionalists or to believe they pose a threat. Progressives more attentive to the deterioration of their party's hegemony, like Massimo Faggioli, Andrea Grillo, Anthony Ruff, Austin Ivereigh, and, of course, Arthur Roche, can't make up their minds between smug denial and white-knuckled panic. All of the serious scholarship is on the traditionalist side, and the case for the reform is weaker by the day, whether assessed by its operating principles or judged by its actual fruits. There is no longer any serious scholarship backing the reform (on the contrary, many of its guiding axioms have been overturned by better scholarship), but its adherents will be the last to recognize that void. Look at how the last living supporters of the *Novus Ordo* ignore the painstaking work of such scholars as Laszlo Dobszay, Lauren Pristas, Dom Alcuin Reid, and Michael Fiedrowicz, while peppering their

own discourse with roughly equal parts of nostalgic bromides from the '60s and the stale "certainties" of the late Liturgical Movement that have about as much scientific currency as mesmerism and phlogiston. Such are the heedless habits of despots on the eve of their overthrow.

In the months that have followed *Traditionis Custodes*, we have seen many well-intentioned people sending personal letters, open letters, and petitions to the pope and to Vatican officials, begging them, with many a "please" and "thank you," to "let us keep the Mass" and so forth. Far be it from me to say that such initiatives can bring about no good; I don't disapprove of anyone signing them. Perhaps I've just been disappointed too many times by the lack of any response to over two dozen earlier petitions on the most serious matters, some of them signed by *hundreds of thousands* of people, directed to the pope, which all led to exactly nothing⁵—or, more likely, which only confirmed for the pope and his circle the dangerous existence of a growing "traditionalist, fundamentalist, integralist" (etc.) movement that has to be crushed before it infiltrates and steers the Church toward a deep continuity with its preconciliar teaching and way of life!

Forget about petitions. What we need most of all is priest after priest after priest who will refuse, under any circumstances whatsoever—including threats, banishments, or penalties—to give up the Latin Mass, the *Rituale*, the Breviary, and so forth; who will continue to be the heroes that the laity need and that Our Lord deserves and rewards; who will understand that in a time of crisis, in a state of war, one does whatever can and may be done, leaving the rest to God; who will experience the riches of God's providence in the laity who rush to their support, so that, giving and receiving natural and supernatural goods, the members sustain one another, as Saint Paul so often urges. That was how the tradition was saved in the '70s, and it will be no different in our times. Will it be messy and ugly? Sure it will. But there is great glory in defending what is true, right, and sacred against its perverse and petty persecutors.

There are a few things that this book will not do. It will not present a formal history and analysis of the *usus antiquior*; for this, I recommend

⁵ See *Defending the Faith against Present Heresies*, ed. John R. T. Lamont and Claudio Pierantoni (Waterloo, ON: Arouca Press, 2020), 323–31.

Michael Fiedrowicz's *The Traditional Mass: History, Form, and Theology of the Classical Roman Rite* (Angelico Press, 2020). It will not mount a full-scale defense of the all-around superiority of our ancient rites; for that, you should check out my book *Reclaiming Our Roman Catholic Birthright: The Genius and Timeliness of the Traditional Latin Mass* (Angelico Press, 2020), and other books of mine in the same vein.⁶ It will not tell the history of the traditionalist movement; for that, American readers may wish to pick up a copy of Stuart Chessman's *Faith of Our Fathers: A Brief History of Catholic Traditionalism in the United States, from Triumph to Traditionis Custodes* (Angelico Press, 2022). It will not offer a detailed analysis of *Traditionis Custodes*, or defend the rights and duties of laity and the lower clergy against the illegitimate commands or prohibitions of their superiors; on these points, I recommend *From Benedict's Peace to Francis's War: Catholics Respond to the Motu Proprio Traditionis Custodes on the Latin Mass* (Angelico Press, 2021) and my tract *True Obedience in the Church: A Guide to Discernment in Challenging Times* (Sophia Institute Press, 2021). The aforementioned books, together with the one you have in your hands, would make a strong core library on the whys and wherefores of Roman Catholic liturgical traditionalism.

No one who understands Catholic theology and the history of the Roman liturgy and who strives for intellectual honesty can accept the Novus Ordo as a true, organic expression of Rome's liturgical prayer. There is only one Roman rite; there can be and will be only one Roman rite. The sole expression of the *lex orandi* of the *ritus Romanus* is the traditional Latin liturgy of the Church of Rome. All else is vanity and vexation of spirit. Whatever egregious errors and breathtaking blunders drove us into our modern Babylonian captivity, we who love the Church and her Tradition must "keep calm and carry on," cherishing, defending, and promoting the precious inheritance we, all unworthy, have received.

Peter A. Kwasniewski

March 12, 2022

Feast of Saint Gregory the Great

⁶ See the bibliography.



Figura loqui tantum
Melanchthoni Sa
artha Deo attributa
etiam panti in unum
cap. 16

Figura Veri Testi
Eorum est dicitur
pantem Angelorum
mandatum dicitur
276/7.

Promissio.
Pantem quem ego
dabo caro mea est
Iohann. 6.

Solutio.
Angeli sunt personae et de
essentia sunt spiritus sancti
sicut dicitur in 1. Cor. 13.
sicut et dicitur in 1. Cor. 13.
sicut et dicitur in 1. Cor. 13.

Abrahamus Blommaert invenit et fecit scilicet Cor. Blommaert fecit

Cum privilegio Sac. Caesaris Maximiliano nono Regis Christianissimi.

S. AUGUSTINUS. in Psal. 98.
Christus de carne. Mariae carnem accepit. et
per caritatem nobis mansuetudinem dedit. ad salutem.

S. HIERONYMUS. epist. ad Modestum quae 2.
Mors non dedit nobis pacem veram. sed dedit Iesu qui
se commisit. et convivia. et comedit. et qui commisit.



S. GREGORIUS. apud Paulum dicit in vita eius.
Cauditer igitur ea potestatis. quae ex nihilo acta erunt. Praeter naturam ordinem. vixisse generavit. et
pantem ex vitiis in castorem et sanguinem suum convertit. hoc quod conficimus. corpus. ex virgine est.

S. AMBROSIIUS. de vi qui mystici unita. ca. 9.
Pantem ex vitiis in castorem et sanguinem suum convertit. hoc quod conficimus. corpus. ex virgine est.

ILLUST. ET EXCELL. PRINCIPI AC DNO. D. GUNDAKERO. DUCI IN SILESIA.
Electissimo. et Nicolaj. Comiti. Ruteniae. Domino in. Moscovico.
et Cameracensi. Principi. ac Domino suo. gratissimum.

OPRAVE. CARNOVALE. TESSIN. ET MAIORIS GLOGOVLE. PRINCIPI A
Crenlovio. Ostia. et Wiffersdorff. Sacre. Caf. Maj. intimo. Confiliario.
Abrahamus Blommaert. dedit. et consecrat. 1629.