



# NewsLetter

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## Apostolic Letter on Use of the Preconciliar Liturgical Forms

*On July 7, 2007 Pope Benedict XVI published a Apostolic Letter under the title Summorum Pontificum, by which the Holy Father allows for and promotes a wider usage of the liturgical books in force in 1962. An unofficial translation of the Apostolic Letter is printed here for the convenience of our readers. A letter from Pope Benedict XVI which accompanied the Apostolic Letter follows the text, as does a BCL summary entitled Fifteen Questions on Summorum Pontificum. The original Latin text of the Apostolic Letter may be found on the BCL website at: [www.usccb.org/liturgy/SummorumPontificum](http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/SummorumPontificum)*

Apostolic Letter  
In the form of "Motu Proprio"  
SUMMORUM PONTIFICUM

BENEDICT XVI

It has always been the care of the Supreme Pontiffs until the present time, that the Church of Christ offer worthy worship to the Divine Majesty "for the praise and glory of his name" and "for the good of all his Holy Church."

As from time immemorial so in the future the principle shall be respected "according to which each particular Church must be in accord with the universal Church not only regarding the doctrine of the faith and sacramental signs, but also as to the usages universally handed down by apostolic and unbroken tradition. These are to be maintained not only so that errors may be avoided, but also so that the faith may be passed on in its integrity, since the Church's rule of prayer (*lex orandi*) corresponds to her rule of belief (*lex credendi*)."<sup>1</sup>

Among Pontiffs who have displayed such care there excels the name of Saint Gregory the Great, who saw to the transmission to the new peoples of Europe both of the Catholic faith and of the treasures of worship and culture accumulated by the Romans in preceding centuries. He gave instructions for the form of the Sacred Liturgy of both the Sacrifice of the Mass and of the Divine Office as was celebrated in the City. He made the greatest efforts to foster monks and nuns, who progressing under the Rule of St Benedict, in every place along with the proclamation of the Gospel by their life likewise exemplified that most salutary expression of the Rule "let nothing be given precedence over the work of God" (chapter 43). In this way the sacred liturgy according to the Roman manner made

<sup>1</sup> *General Instruction of the Roman Missal, third edition, 2002, n. 397*

fertile not only the faith and piety but also the culture of many peoples. Moreover it is evident that the Latin Liturgy in its various forms has stimulated in the spiritual life very many Saints in every century of the Christian age and strengthened in the virtue of religion so many peoples and made fertile their piety.

However, in order that the Sacred Liturgy might more efficaciously absolve its task, several others among the Roman Pontiffs in the course of the centuries have brought to bear particular concern, among whom Saint Pius V is eminent, who with great pastoral zeal, at the exhortation of the Council of Trent, renewed the worship of the whole Church, ensuring the publishing of liturgical books amended and “restored according to the norm of the Fathers” and put them into use in the Latin Church.

It is clear that among the liturgical books of the Roman Rite the *Roman Missal* is eminent. It grew in the city of Rome and gradually down through the centuries took on forms which are very similar to those in vigor in recent generations.

“It was this same goal that as time passed the Roman Pontiffs pursued, adapting or establishing liturgical rites and books to new ages and then at the start of the present century undertaking a more ample restoration.”<sup>2</sup> It was in this manner that our Predecessors Clement VIII, Urban VIII, St Pius X, Benedict XV, Pius XII and the Blessed John XXIII acted.

In more recent time, however, the Second Vatican Council expressed the desire that with due respect and reverence for divine worship it be restored and adapted to the needs of our age. Prompted by this desire, our Predecessor the Supreme Pontiff Paul VI in 1970 approved for the Latin Church liturgical books restored and partly renewed, and that throughout the world translated into many vernacular languages, have been welcomed by the Bishops and by the priests and faithful. John Paul II revised the third typical edition of the *Roman Missal*. Thus the Roman Pontiffs have acted so that “this liturgical edifice, so to speak, ...might once again appear splendid in its dignity and harmony.”<sup>4</sup>

However in some regions not a small number of the faithful have been and remain attached with such great love and affection to the previous liturgical forms, which had profoundly imbued their culture and spirit, that the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II, prompted by pastoral concern for these faithful, in 1984 by means of a special Indult *Quattuor abhinc annos*, drawn up by the Congregation for Divine Worship, granted the faculty to use the *Roman Missal* published by John XXIII in 1962; while in 1988 John Paul II once again, by means of the Motu Proprio *Ecclesia Dei*, exhorted the Bishops to make wide and generous use of this faculty in favor of all the faithful requesting it.

Having pondered at length the pressing requests of these faithful to our Predecessor John Paul II, having also heard the Fathers of the Consistory of Cardinals held on 23 March 2006, having pondered all things, invoked the Holy Spirit and placed our confidence in the help of God, by this present Apostolic Letter we DECREE the following.

Art. 1. The *Roman Missal* promulgated by Paul VI is to be regarded as the ordinary expression of the law of prayer (*lex orandi*) of the Catholic Church of Latin Rite, while the *Roman Missal* promulgated by St Pius V and published again by Blessed John XXIII as the extraordinary expression of the law of prayer (*lex orandi*) and on account of its venerable and ancient use let it enjoy due honor. These two expressions of the law of prayer (*lex orandi*) of the Church in no way lead to a division in the law of prayer (*lex orandi*) of the Church, for they are two uses of the one Roman Rite.

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<sup>2</sup> Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus*, 4 December 1988, n. 3: AAS 81 (1989) p. 899.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>4</sup> Pope St Pius X, Motu Proprio *Abhinc duos annos*, 23 October 1913: AAS 5 (1913) 449-450; cf. Pope John Paul II, Ap. Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus*, 4 December 1988, n. 3: AAS 81 (1989) p. 899.

Hence it is licit to celebrate the Sacrifice of the Mass in accordance with the typical edition of the *Roman Missal* promulgated by Blessed John XXIII in 1962 and never abrogated, as the extraordinary form of the Liturgy of the Church. The conditions laid down by the previous documents *Quattuor abhinc annos* and *Ecclesia Dei* for the use of this *Missal* are replaced by what follows:

Art. 2. In Masses celebrated without the people, any priest of Latin rite, whether secular or religious, can use the *Roman Missal* published by Pope Blessed John XXIII in 1962 or the *Roman Missal* promulgated by the Supreme Pontiff Paul VI in 1970, on any day except in the Sacred Triduum. For celebration in accordance with one or the other *Missal*, a priest does not require any permission, neither from the Apostolic See nor his own Ordinary.

Art. 3. If Communities or Institutes of Consecrated Life or Societies of Apostolic Life of either pontifical or diocesan rite desire to have a celebration of Holy Mass in accordance with the edition of the *Roman Missal* promulgated in 1962 in the conventual or “community” celebration in their own oratories, this is allowed. If an individual community or the entire Institute or Society wants to have such celebrations often or habitually or permanently, the matter is to be decided by the Major Superiors according to the norm of law and the particular laws and statutes.

Art. 4. With due observance of law, even Christ’s faithful who spontaneously request it, may be admitted to celebrations of Holy Mass mentioned in art. 2 above.

Art. 5, § 1. In parishes where a group of faithful attached to the previous liturgical tradition exists stably, let the pastor willingly accede to their requests for the celebration of the Holy Mass according to the rite of the *Roman Missal* published in 1962. Let him see to it that the good of these faithful be harmoniously reconciled with ordinary pastoral care of the parish, under the governance of the Bishop according to canon 392, avoiding discord and fostering the unity of the whole Church.

§ 2. Celebration according to the *Missal* of Blessed John XXIII can take place on weekdays, while on Sundays and on feast days there may be one such celebration.

§ 3. Let the pastor permit celebrations in this extraordinary form for faithful or priests who request it, even in particular circumstances such as weddings, funerals or occasional celebrations, for example pilgrimages.

§ 4. Priests using the *Missal* of Blessed John XXIII must be worthy and not impeded by law.

§ 5. In churches, which are neither parochial nor conventual, it is the Rector of the church who grants the above-mentioned permission.

Art. 6. In Masses celebrated with the people according to the *Missal* of Blessed John XXIII, the Readings can be proclaimed even in the vernacular, using editions that have received the *recognitio* of the Apostolic See.

Art. 7. Where some group of lay faithful, mentioned in art. 5§1 does not obtain what it requests from the pastor, it should inform the diocesan Bishop of the fact. The Bishop is earnestly requested to grant their desire. If he cannot provide for this kind of celebration, let the matter be referred to the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*.

Art. 8. A Bishop who desires to make provision for requests of lay faithful of this kind, but is for various reasons prevented from doing so, may refer the matter to the Pontifical Commission “*Ecclesia Dei*”, which should give him advice and help.

Art. 9, § 1. Likewise a pastor may, all things duly considered, grant permission to use the older ritual in administering the Sacraments of Baptism, Matrimony, Penance and the Anointing of the Sick, as the good of souls may suggest.

§ 2. Ordinaries are granted the faculty to celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation using the former *Roman Pontifical*, as the good of souls may suggest.

§ 3. It is lawful for clerics in holy orders to use even the Roman Breviary promulgated by Blessed John XXIII in 1962.

Art 10. It is lawful for the local Ordinary, if he judges it opportune, to erect a personal parish according to the norm of canon 518 for celebrations according to the older form of the Roman rite or appoint a rector or chaplain, with due observance of the requirements of law.

Art. 11. The Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*, erected in 1988 by John Paul II,<sup>5</sup> continues to carry out its function. This Commission is to have the form, duties and norm for action that the Roman Pontiff may wish to assign to it.

Art. 12. The same Commission, in addition to the faculties it already enjoys, will exercise the authority of the Holy See by maintaining vigilance over the observance and application of these dispositions.

Whatever is decreed by Us by means of this Motu Proprio, we order to be firm and ratified and to be observed as of 14 September this year, the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, all things to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at Rome, at St Peter's, on 7 July in the Year of Our Lord 2007, the Third of Our Pontificate.

BENEDICT XVI

## **Letter of Pope Benedict XVI Accompanying the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum***

My dear Brother Bishops,

With great trust and hope, I am consigning to you as Pastors the text of a new Apostolic Letter “Motu Proprio data” on the use of the Roman liturgy prior to the reform of 1970. The document is the fruit of much reflection, numerous consultations and prayer.

News reports and judgments made without sufficient information have created no little confusion. There have been very divergent reactions ranging from joyful acceptance to harsh opposition, about a plan whose contents were in reality unknown.

This document was most directly opposed on account of two fears, which I would like to address somewhat more closely in this letter.

In the first place, there is the fear that the document detracts from the authority of the Second Vatican Council, one of whose essential decisions – the liturgical reform – is being called into question.

This fear is unfounded. In this regard, it must first be said that the Missal published by Paul VI and then republished in two subsequent editions by John Paul II, obviously is and continues to be the normal Form – the *Forma ordinaria* – of the Eucharistic Liturgy. The last version of the *Missale Romanum* prior to the Council,

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Pope John Paul II, Motu proprio *Ecclesia Dei adflicta*, 2 July 1988, n. 6: AAS 80 (1988) p. 1498.

which was published with the authority of Pope John XXIII in 1962 and used during the Council, will now be able to be used as a *Forma extraordinaria* of the liturgical celebration. It is not appropriate to speak of these two versions of the Roman Missal as if they were “two Rites”. Rather, it is a matter of a twofold use of one and the same rite.

As for the use of the 1962 Missal as a *Forma extraordinaria* of the liturgy of the Mass, I would like to draw attention to the fact that this Missal was never juridically abrogated and, consequently, in principle, was always permitted. At the time of the introduction of the new Missal, it did not seem necessary to issue specific norms for the possible use of the earlier Missal. Probably it was thought that it would be a matter of a few individual cases which would be resolved, case by case, on the local level. Afterwards, however, it soon became apparent that a good number of people remained strongly attached to this usage of the Roman Rite, which had been familiar to them from childhood. This was especially the case in countries where the liturgical movement had provided many people with a notable liturgical formation and a deep, personal familiarity with the earlier Form of the liturgical celebration. We all know that, in the movement led by Archbishop Lefebvre, fidelity to the old Missal became an external mark of identity; the reasons for the break, which arose over this, however, were at a deeper level. Many people who clearly accepted the binding character of the Second Vatican Council, and were faithful to the Pope and the Bishops, nonetheless also desired to recover the form of the sacred liturgy that was dear to them. This occurred above all because in many places celebrations were not faithful to the prescriptions of the new Missal, but the latter actually was understood as authorizing or even requiring creativity, which frequently led to deformations of the liturgy which were hard to bear. I am speaking from experience, since I too lived through that period with all its hopes and its confusion. And I have seen how arbitrary deformations of the liturgy caused deep pain to individuals totally rooted in the faith of the Church.

Pope John Paul II thus felt obliged to provide, in his Motu Proprio *Ecclesia Dei* (2 July 1988), guidelines for the use of the 1962 Missal; that document, however, did not contain detailed prescriptions but appealed in a general way to the generous response of Bishops towards the “legitimate aspirations” of those members of the faithful who requested this usage of the Roman Rite. At the time, the Pope primarily wanted to assist the Society of Saint Pius X to recover full unity with the Successor of Peter, and sought to heal a wound experienced ever more painfully. Unfortunately this reconciliation has not yet come about. Nonetheless, a number of communities have gratefully made use of the possibilities provided by the Motu Proprio. On the other hand, difficulties remain concerning the use of the 1962 Missal outside of these groups, because of the lack of precise juridical norms, particularly because Bishops, in such cases, frequently feared that the authority of the Council would be called into question. Immediately after the Second Vatican Council it was presumed that requests for the use of the 1962 Missal would be limited to the older generation which had grown up with it, but in the meantime it has clearly been demonstrated that young persons too have discovered this liturgical form, felt its attraction and found in it a form of encounter with the Mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist, particularly suited to them. Thus the need has arisen for a clearer juridical regulation which had not been foreseen at the time of the 1988 Motu Proprio. The present Norms are also meant to free Bishops from constantly having to evaluate anew how they are to respond to various situations.

In the second place, the fear was expressed in discussions about the awaited Motu Proprio, that the possibility of a wider use of the 1962 Missal would lead to disarray or even divisions within parish communities. This fear also strikes me as quite unfounded. The use of the old Missal presupposes a certain degree of liturgical formation and some knowledge of the Latin language; neither of these is found very often. Already from these concrete presuppositions, it is clearly seen that the new Missal will certainly remain the ordinary Form of the Roman Rite, not only on account of the juridical norms, but also because of the actual situation of the communities of the faithful.

It is true that there have been exaggerations and at times social aspects unduly linked to the attitude of the faithful attached to the ancient Latin liturgical tradition. Your charity and pastoral prudence will be an incentive and guide for improving these. For that matter, the two Forms of the usage of the Roman Rite can be mutually enriching: new Saints and some of the new Prefaces can and should be inserted in the old Missal. The “*Ecclesia Dei*” Commission, in contact with various bodies devoted to the *usus antiquior*, will study the practical

possibilities in this regard. The celebration of the Mass according to the Missal of Paul VI will be able to demonstrate, more powerfully than has been the case hitherto, the sacrality which attracts many people to the former usage. The most sure guarantee that the Missal of Paul VI can unite parish communities and be loved by them consists in its being celebrated with great reverence in harmony with the liturgical directives. This will bring out the spiritual richness and the theological depth of this Missal.

I now come to the positive reason which motivated my decision to issue this Motu Proprio updating that of 1988. It is a matter of coming to an interior reconciliation in the heart of the Church. Looking back over the past, to the divisions which in the course of the centuries have rent the Body of Christ, one continually has the impression that, at critical moments when divisions were coming about, not enough was done by the Church's leaders to maintain or regain reconciliation and unity. One has the impression that omissions on the part of the Church have had their share of blame for the fact that these divisions were able to harden. This glance at the past imposes an obligation on us today: to make every effort to make it possible for all those who truly desire unity to remain in that unity or to attain it anew. I think of a sentence in the Second Letter to the Corinthians, where Paul writes: "Our mouth is open to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide. You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections. In return ... widen your hearts also!" (2 Cor 6:11-13). Paul was certainly speaking in another context, but his exhortation can and must touch us too, precisely on this subject. Let us generously open our hearts and make room for everything that the faith itself allows.

There is no contradiction between the two editions of the Roman Missal. In the history of the liturgy there is growth and progress, but no rupture. What earlier generations held as sacred, remains sacred and great for us too, and it cannot be all of a sudden entirely forbidden or even considered harmful. It behooves all of us to preserve the riches which have developed in the Church's faith and prayer, and to give them their proper place. Needless to say, in order to experience full communion, also the priests of the communities adhering to the former usage cannot, as a matter of principle, exclude celebrating according to the new books. The total exclusion of the new rite would not in fact be consistent with the recognition of its value and holiness.

In conclusion, dear Brothers, I very much wish to stress that these new norms do not in any way lessen your own authority and responsibility, either for the liturgy or for the pastoral care of your faithful. Each Bishop, in fact, is the moderator of the liturgy in his own Diocese (cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 22: "Sacrae Liturgiae moderatio ab Ecclesiae auctoritate unice pendet quae quidem est apud Apostolicam Sedem et, ad normam iuris, apud Episcopum").

Nothing is taken away, then, from the authority of the Bishop, whose role remains that of being watchful that all is done in peace and serenity. Should some problem arise which the parish priest cannot resolve, the local Ordinary will always be able to intervene, in full harmony, however, with all that has been laid down by the new norms of the Motu Proprio.

Furthermore, I invite you, dear Brothers, to send to the Holy See an account of your experiences, three years after this Motu Proprio has taken effect. If truly serious difficulties come to light, ways to remedy them can be sought.

Dear Brothers, with gratitude and trust, I entrust to your hearts as Pastors these pages and the norms of the Motu Proprio. Let us always be mindful of the words of the Apostle Paul addressed to the presbyters of Ephesus: "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the Church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son" (*Acts* 20:28).

I entrust these norms to the powerful intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, and I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to you, dear Brothers, to the parish priests of your dioceses, and to all the priests, your co-workers, as well as to all your faithful.

Given at Saint Peter's, 7 July 2007.

BENEDICT XVI

## Twenty Questions on the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum*

### 1. What is the purpose of Pope Benedict XVI's *Apostolic Letter, Summorum Pontificum*?

By this Apostolic Letter, promulgated *motu proprio*, the Holy Father seeks an “interior reconciliation in the heart of the Church”<sup>6</sup> with those who have demonstrated an attachment to preconciliar liturgical forms, making “it possible for all those who truly desire unity to remain in that unity or to attain it anew.” Thus does he exhort the whole Church to “generously open our hearts and make room for everything that the faith itself allows.”<sup>7</sup>

### 2. How does the Apostolic Letter describe the preconciliar edition of the *Missale Romanum*?

The Holy Father begins by defining two forms of the rule of prayer (*Lex orandi*) of the Latin church of Roman Rite: an ordinary form, as contained in the *Missale Romanum* of Pope Paul VI,<sup>8</sup> and an extraordinary form, as contained in the *Missale Romanum* of Pope Saint Pius V.<sup>9</sup> He notes that the extraordinary form was never abrogated and the two forms make up the Liturgy of the one Roman Rite.<sup>10</sup>

### 3. When may a Priest celebrate the *extraordinary form* in a Mass without the people?

Any Priest of the Latin Church may, without any further permission from the Holy See or his Ordinary, celebrate the extraordinary form of the *Missale Romanum* in a Mass without the people at any time except during the Sacred Triduum.<sup>11</sup> If members of the faithful wish to join in these celebrations, they are permitted to do so.<sup>12</sup>

### 4. May the extraordinary form be used in religious communities?

Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life who wish to do so may celebrate according to the extraordinary form in their own oratories.<sup>13</sup>

### 5. When may the extraordinary form be used in parishes?

In parishes where a group of the faithful are attached to the extraordinary form of the Mass, they may approach the pastor, who is to support their petition willingly. No permissions are required.<sup>14</sup>

### 6. May the extraordinary form of the other sacraments also be celebrated?

For the good of souls, a canonical pastor may also grant permission for the celebration of the other Sacraments, Christian Funerals or other occasional celebrations according to the extraordinary form, when requested to do so by priests or a group of the faithful.<sup>15</sup>

### 7. If a priest fails to demonstrate a minimum rubrical or linguistic ability to celebrate the extraordinary form, may he still celebrate the 1962 *Missale Romanum*?

No. In order to celebrate the extraordinary form, a Priest must be suitably qualified for and not prohibited by any impediments to the celebration of the Mass according to the 1962 *Missale Romanum*.<sup>16</sup> This means he must have the minimum knowledge and ability required for a legitimate use of the extraordinary form.

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6 Pope Benedict XVI, Cover letter to the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum*.

7 Ibid.

8 This *Missal* was most recently promulgated in 2001 as the third typical edition, by the Servant of God, John Paul II.

9 This *Missal* was most recently promulgated in 1962 as the seventh typical edition by the Blessed John XXIII.

10 Cf. Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum* [SP], article 1.

11 Cf. SP, no. 2.

12 Cf. SP, no. 4.

13 Cf. SP, no. 3.

14 Cf. SP, no. 5§1.

15 Cf. SP, no. 5§3 and 9§1.

16 Cf. SP, no. 5§4.

**8. As a rule, is it possible for a priest to abandon the ordinary form entirely?**

No. The Holy Father states unequivocally that “in order to experience full communion, the priests of the communities adhering to the former usage cannot, as a matter of principle, exclude celebrating according to the new books. The total exclusion of the new rite would not in fact be consistent with the recognition of its value and holiness.”<sup>17</sup>

**9. What happens if a pastor is unable to fulfill the request of the faithful?**

“Should some problem arise which the parish priest cannot resolve, the local Ordinary will always be able to intervene, in full harmony, however, with all that has been laid down by the new norms of the *Motu Proprio*.”<sup>18</sup> Should the local ordinary be unable to respond to the request, it may be referred to the *Ecclesia Dei* Commission.<sup>19</sup>

**10. Is the role of the Diocesan Bishop in supervising the Sacred Liturgy diminished by this Apostolic Letter?**

No. The norms “do not in any way lessen the Bishop’s own authority and responsibility, either for the liturgy or for the pastoral care of [the] faithful. Each Bishop, in fact, is the moderator of the liturgy in his own Diocese.”<sup>20</sup> As such, he is required both to implement the universal norms of the Church as well as to intervene to prevent abuses from arising with regard to liturgical celebrations in his diocese.

**11. What other provisions are made for use of the extraordinary form?**

The Bishop may celebrate the *Rite of Confirmation* according to the extraordinary form as found in the edition of the *Roman Pontifical* in effect in 1962.<sup>21</sup> Clerics in Holy Orders may use the *Roman Breviary* of Blessed John XXIII promulgated in 1962.<sup>22</sup>

**12. When the extraordinary form is celebrated, what calendar and Lectionary may be used?**

Whenever the extraordinary form of the Roman Liturgy is celebrated, the vernacular edition of the *Lectionary for Mass* may be used, while the calendar of the Missal of Blessed John XXIII is followed.<sup>23</sup> The *Ecclesia Dei* Commission has been charged with studying the eventual incorporation of new saints and some of the prefaces of the revised *Missale* into the *Missale Romanum* of Blessed John XXIII.

**13. Who regulates the implementation of this Apostolic Letter?**

The Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei* is charged with assuring proper observance and application of the norms of the Apostolic Letter.

**14. Does the wider use of the extraordinary form of the rites of Holy Week reflect a change in the Church’s teaching on anti-Semitism ?**

No. The 1962 *Missale Romanum* already reflected Blessed John XXIII’s revision of liturgical language often construed as anti-Semitic. In 1965, the watershed statement *Nostra Aetate*, of the Second Vatican Council then repudiated all forms of anti-Semitism as having no place within Christian life. When Pope Paul VI issued the *Missale Romanum* of 1969, the only prayer for the Jewish people in the Roman liturgy was completely revised for Good Friday to reflect a renewed understanding of the Jews as God’s chosen people, “first to hear the word of God.”

Throughout his papacy, John Paul II worked effectively to reconcile the Church with the Jewish people and to strengthen new bonds of friendship. In 1988, Pope John Paul II gave permission for the Mass to be celebrated

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17 Pope Benedict XVI, Cover letter to the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum*.

18 Ibid.

19 Cf. SP, no. 7. *Ecclesia Dei* is a Commission of the Holy See which was formed by Pope John Paul II by his 1984 Apostolic Letter of the same name.

20 Cf. SP, no. 7.

21 Cf. SP, no. 9§2.

22 Cf. SP, no. 9§3.

23 Cf. SP, no. 6.

according to the *Missale Romanum* of 1962 only as a pastoral provision to assist Catholics who remained attached to the previous rites, thereby hoping to develop closer bonds with the family of the Church.

By this new Apostolic Letter, Pope Benedict XVI is merely extending such permission for wider pastoral application, but remains committed to “the need to overcome past prejudices, misunderstandings, indifference and the language of contempt and hostility [and to continue] the Jewish-Christian dialogue...to enrich and deepen the bonds of friendship which have developed.”<sup>24</sup>

**15. Where may Bishops turn for support and assistance with the implementation of the *Apostolic Letter* and the supervision of the extraordinary form of the Roman Liturgy?**

The Committee on the Liturgy and its Secretariat are charged by the USCCB with the supervision of the implementation of the provisions of *Ecclesia Dei Afflicta*, and will continue to provide support and advice on this important pastoral initiative.

**16. Prior to the publication of this Apostolic Letter, what provisions have been in force?**

By a the letter of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (*Quattuor abhinc annos*, 1984), Pope John Paul II granted to diocesan Bishops the use of an indult whereby priests and faithful would be allowed to celebrate the 1962 edition of the *Missale Romanum*, providing that such priests or faithful: (1) accepted the legitimacy and doctrinal exactitude of the post-conciliar *Missale Romanum*; (2) celebrated these rites in a church designated by the bishop; (3) and celebrated these rites according to the 1962 *Missale Romanum*, without intermingling the post-conciliar rites. Pope John Paul II encouraged Bishops to make “a wide and generous application” of this indult in the *motu proprio Ecclesia Dei Afflicta* (1988).

**17. How does the new Apostolic Letter differ from these previous provisions?**

The Apostolic Letter of Pope Benedict XVI differs from the previous provisions in the following ways:

	<i>Quattuor Abhinc Annos</i> and <i>Ecclesia Dei Afflicta</i>	<i>Summorum Pontificum</i>
<b>What books may be used?</b>	The 1962 <i>Missale Romanum</i>	The 1962 <i>Missale Romanum</i> <b>and</b> all other Roman liturgical rites in force in 1962
<b>Who may permit the use of these books?</b>	The Diocesan Bishop may grant permission to priests or groups of the faithful at his discretion, but should be wide and generous in application of this indult	Any Priest of the Latin Church may celebrate the extraordinary form privately. Pastors are asked to receive willingly the request of groups of the faithful for the Mass and the Sacraments according to the extraordinary form.
<b>Who supervises the celebration of the Liturgy of either form?</b>	The Diocesan Bishop supervises the correct celebration of all liturgical rites. The Diocesan Bishop must report to the Holy See on progress of indults he has granted	The Diocesan Bishop maintains vigilance over the correct celebration of all liturgical rites, both ordinary and extraordinary. If the pastor is unable to respond to the request of a group of the faithful, the Bishop receives the request. If the Bishop is not able to respond, the matter may be referred to the <i>Ecclesia Dei</i> Commission, which enjoys competence over the extraordinary rite on behalf of the Holy See.
<b>Where may celebrations of the extraordinary form take place?</b>	The celebrations take place only in a place designated by the Diocesan Bishop, but usually not in a parish Church.	There is no restriction on where the extraordinary form may be celebrated.
<b>Must those celebrating the older form acknowledge the current</b>	A condition of granting the indult is acknowledgement of the legitimacy and doctrinal exactitude of the current	There is no requirement for a determination of acceptance of the current <i>Roman Missal</i> by those seeking to

<sup>24</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, On the occasion of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate*, October 27, 2005.

<b>liturgical books?</b>	<i>Missale Romanum</i> .	celebrate the extraordinary form, although this appears to be presumed.
<b>May rites from the two forms be mixed?</b>	No admixture of the rites of the 1962 and current editions of the <i>Missale Romanum</i> is allowed.	The vernacular edition of the Lectionary for Mass may be used in the extraordinary form, while the 1962 calendar is to be followed. The Ecclesia Dei Commission will study the eventual integration of new saints and some prefaces from the ordinary form into the extraordinary Missal.

**18. Why are the present norms not adequate to meet these needs?**

In his cover letter, the Holy Father notes that while the present norms have been applied to good pastoral effect in many circumstances, difficulties remain “because of the lack of precise juridical norms, particularly because Bishops, in such cases, frequently feared that the authority of the Council would be called into question.”<sup>25</sup> The new norms are intended “to free Bishops from constantly having to evaluate anew how they are to respond to various situations.”<sup>26</sup>

**19. Does this action call into question the liturgical reform of the Second Vatican Council?**

No. The Holy Father makes clear that the current *Missale Romanum* is the ordinary form (*forma ordinaria*) of the Eucharistic Liturgy. The extraordinary form is found in the 1962 Missal of Blessed John XXIII.<sup>27</sup>

**20. When will the Apostolic Letter take effect?**

The Apostolic letter will take effect on September 14, 2007, the feast of the Triumph of the Holy Cross.



**Ten Questions on the Ordinary and Extraordinary Forms of the *Missale Romanum***

**1. Why was the 1962 Missal of Blessed John XXIII chosen as the extraordinary form?**

From the time of the Council of Trent to the Second Vatican Council there were seven official editions of the *Missale Romanum*. They were promulgated by Popes Saint Pius V (1570), Clement VI (1604), Urban VIII (1634), Leo XII (1994), Saint Pius X (1911), Benedict XV (1920), and Blessed John XXIII (1962). The 1962 edition was chosen as the last edition of the *Missale Romanum* promulgated before the Second Vatican Council.

**2. Are the extraordinary and ordinary forms entirely different?**

The Holy Father observes that there is “no contradiction between them and that the history of liturgical books is characterized by “growth and progress, but no rupture.”<sup>28</sup>

What earlier generations held as sacred, remains sacred and great for us too, and it cannot be all of a sudden entirely forbidden or even considered harmful. It behooves all of us to preserve the riches which have developed in the Church’s faith and prayer, and to give them their proper place.<sup>29</sup>

25 Pope Benedict XVI, Cover letter to the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum*.

26 Ibid.

27 Pope Benedict XVI, Cover letter to the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum*.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

**3. How does participation of the faithful in the *Missale Romanum* of Blessed John XXIII differ from the *Missale Romanum* of the Servant of God, John Paul II?**

In both the ordinary and extraordinary forms of the *Missale Romanum*, full, conscious, and active participation of the faithful is to be desired above all else.<sup>30</sup> In both forms, this begins with an interior participation in the sacrifice of Christ, to which the gathered assembly is joined by the prayers and rites of the Mass. The ordinary form of the rite customarily accomplishes this participation through listening and responding to the prayers of the Mass in the vernacular, and by taking part in forms of exterior communal action. The extraordinary form accomplishes this participation largely through listening to the prayers in Latin and following the words and actions of the Priest and joining our hearts to “what is said by him in the Name of Christ and [what] Christ says [to] him.”<sup>31</sup>

**4. How does the role of the Priest differ in the *Missale Romanum* of Blessed John XXIII differ from the *Missale Romanum* of the Servant of God, John Paul II?**

The major differences concerning the role of the Priest in the ordinary and extraordinary forms pertain to orientation and language. During most moments of the Mass the Priest faces the altar with his back to the people. All prayers are in Latin, with only the readings and the Homily in the vernacular.

**5. What other major differences characterize the extraordinary and ordinary forms of the *Missale Romanum*?**

Extraordinary Form (1962)	Ordinary Form (2007)
includes 1% of Old Testament	includes 14% of Old Testament
includes 17% of New Testament	includes 71% of New Testament
Begins with prayers at the foot of the altar prayed privately by priest and server	Begins with a greeting and communal penitential rite
One Eucharistic Prayer: the Roman Canon	Nine Eucharistic Prayers, the first of which is the Roman Canon
Faithful usually receive Holy Communion only under one kind	Allows for wider distribution of Holy Communion under both kinds to the faithful
Last Gospel and Prayers to Saint Michael the Archangel included in closing rites	Closing rites include Prayer after Communion, Blessing and Dismissal
Preserves prayers and rites of 1570 with some changes	Simplifies prayers and rites in the light of contemporary research and understanding
Only clerics or “altar boys” perform liturgical ministry	Restores lay liturgical ministries and encourages careful differentiation of roles

**6. What are the reasons why people remain strongly attached to the preconciliar form?**

The Holy Father suggests a number of reasons. In the case of the followers of Archbishop Lefebvre, while the preconciliar Missal became “an external mark of identity,” it is clear that “the reasons for the break, which arose over this, however, were at a deeper level.”<sup>32</sup>

Some remained strongly attached to rites with which they had become familiar from childhood. A primary cause of this affection in other faithful Catholics was the false sense of creativity unfortunately practiced by some in the celebration of the postconciliar liturgical rites, leading to “deformations of the liturgy which were hard to bear.”<sup>33</sup> The Holy Father adds a personal note in his cover letter: “I am speaking from experience, since I too lived through that period with all its hopes and its confusion. And I have seen how arbitrary deformations of the liturgy caused deep pain to individuals totally rooted in the faith of the Church.”<sup>34</sup>

30 Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 14.

31 Saint Pius X, in *The Daily Missal and Liturgical Manual from the Editio Typica of the Roman Missal and Breviary*, 1962, Baronius Press, London, 2004, p. 897.

32 Pope Benedict XVI, Cover letter to the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum*.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

Finally, the Holy Father describes those young people who “have discovered this liturgical form, felt its attraction and found in it a form of encounter with the Mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist, particularly suited to them.”<sup>35</sup> With this *motu proprio* he is responding to all three of these groups.

### **7. Won't the new norms cause division in parishes and exacerbate the tensions between those attached to the preconciliar and postconciliar forms?**

The Holy Father sees such fears as “quite unfounded,” since the kind of rubrical and linguistic skills required for the preconciliar form is not found very often. It is, therefore, “clearly seen that the new Missal will certainly remain the ordinary Form of the Roman Rite, not only on account of the juridical norms, but also because of the actual situation of the communities of the faithful.”<sup>36</sup>

### **8. How will the two forms influence each other?**

The Holy Father expresses his hope that the new saints and some of the new prefaces can eventually be integrated into the 1962 *Missal* by the *Ecclesia Dei* Commission, while the use of the preconciliar form will enhance an appreciation in the ordinary form for “the sacrality which attracts many people to the former usage.” In this regard he emphasizes: “The most sure guarantee that the Missal of Paul VI can unite parish communities and be loved by them consists in its being celebrated with great reverence in harmony with the liturgical directives.”<sup>37</sup>

### **9. What are the challenges for those attached to the preconciliar form?**

The Holy Father notes certain “exaggerations and at times social aspects” linked to “the attitude of the faithful attached to the ancient Latin liturgical tradition.” For this reason he asks for “charity and pastoral prudence.”<sup>38</sup>

### **10. What mandate did the fathers of the Second Vatican Council give for the renewal of the Sacred Liturgy?**

In the *Constitution on the Liturgy (Sacrosanctum concilium)*, number 50, the Council Fathers decreed that:

The Order of Mass is to be revised in a way that will bring out more clearly the intrinsic nature and purpose of its several parts, as also the connection between them, and will more readily achieve the devout, active participation of the faithful.

For this purpose the rites are to be simplified, due care being taken to preserve their substance; elements that, with the passage of time, came to be duplicated or were added with but little advantage are now to be discarded; other elements that have suffered injury through accident of history are now, as may seem useful or necessary, to be restored to the vigor they had in the traditions of the Fathers.



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35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Pope Benedict XVI, Cover letter to the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum*.

38 Ibid.