

Vatican II Class Handouts

Sources

Readings

Austin Flannery, ed.	<i>Vatican II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents vol.1</i>
Romano Amerio	<i>Iota unum</i>
Ralph Wiltgen	<i>The Rhine Flows into the Tiber</i>
Thomas Kocik	<i>Reform of the Reform?</i>
Jonathan Robinson	<i>The Mass and Modernity</i>
Ralph McInerny	<i>What Went Wrong with Vatican II</i>
Michael Rose	<i>Goodbye, Good Men</i>
Donna Steichen	<i>Ungodly Rage</i>
Kenneth Jones	<i>Index of Leading Catholic Indicators</i>
Philip Hughes	<i>The Church in Crisis: A History of the General Councils 325-1870</i>
Klaus Gamber	<i>The Reform of the Roman Liturgy</i>

Good Magazines

Homiletic and Pastoral Review

Catholic World Report

Inside the Vatican

Catholic Hearth

Online Access to Pius XII and Vatican II

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/index.htm

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/index.htm

Benedict XVI to Roman Curia 22 December 2005

The last event of this year on which I wish to reflect here is the celebration of the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council 40 years ago. This memory prompts the question: What has been the result of the Council? Was it well received? What, in the acceptance of the Council, was good and what was inadequate or mistaken? What still remains to be done? No one can deny that in vast areas of the Church the implementation of the Council has been somewhat difficult, even without wishing to apply to what occurred in these years the description that St Basil, the great Doctor of the Church, made of the Church's situation after the Council of Nicea: he compares her situation to a naval battle in the darkness of the storm, saying among other things: "The raucous shouting of those who through disagreement rise up against one another, the incomprehensible chatter, the confused din of uninterrupted clamouring, has now filled almost the whole of the Church, falsifying through excess or failure the right doctrine of the faith..." (*De Spiritu Sancto*, XXX, 77; PG 32, 213 A; SCh 17 ff., p. 524).

We do not want to apply precisely this dramatic description to the situation of the post-conciliar period, yet something from all that occurred is nevertheless reflected in it. The question arises: Why has the implementation of the Council, in large parts of the Church, thus far been so difficult?

Well, it all depends on the correct interpretation of the Council or - as we would say today - on its proper hermeneutics, the correct key to its interpretation and application. The problems in its implementation arose from the fact that two contrary hermeneutics came face to face and quarrelled with each other. One caused confusion, the other, silently but more and more visibly, bore and is bearing fruit.

On the one hand, there is an interpretation that I would call "a hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture"; it has frequently availed itself of the sympathies of the mass media, and also one trend of modern theology. On the other, there is the "hermeneutic of reform", of renewal in the continuity of the one subject-Church which the Lord has given to us. She is a subject which increases in time and develops, yet always remaining the same, the one subject of the journeying People of God.

The hermeneutic of discontinuity risks ending in a split between the pre-conciliar Church and the post-conciliar Church. It asserts that the texts of the Council as such do not yet express the true spirit of the Council. It claims that they are the result of compromises in which, to reach unanimity, it was found necessary to keep and reconfirm many old things that are now pointless. However, the true spirit of the Council is not to be found in these compromises but instead in the impulses toward the new that are contained in the texts.

These innovations alone were supposed to represent the true spirit of the Council, and starting from and in conformity with them, it would be possible to move ahead. Precisely because the texts would only imperfectly reflect the true spirit of the Council and its newness, it would be necessary to go courageously beyond the texts and make room for the

newness in which the Council's deepest intention would be expressed, even if it were still vague.

In a word: it would be necessary not to follow the texts of the Council but its spirit. In this way, obviously, a vast margin was left open for the question on how this spirit should subsequently be defined and room was consequently made for every whim.

The nature of a Council as such is therefore basically misunderstood. In this way, it is considered as a sort of constituent that eliminates an old constitution and creates a new one. However, the Constituent Assembly needs a mandator and then confirmation by the mandator, in other words, the people the constitution must serve. The Fathers had no such mandate and no one had ever given them one; nor could anyone have given them one because the essential constitution of the Church comes from the Lord and was given to us so that we might attain eternal life and, starting from this perspective, be able to illuminate life in time and time itself.

Through the Sacrament they have received, Bishops are stewards of the Lord's gift. They are "stewards of the mysteries of God" (I Cor 4: 1); as such, they must be found to be "faithful" and "wise" (cf. Lk 12: 41-48). This requires them to administer the Lord's gift in the right way, so that it is not left concealed in some hiding place but bears fruit, and the Lord may end by saying to the administrator: "Since you were dependable in a small matter I will put you in charge of larger affairs" (cf. Mt 25: 14-30; Lk 19: 11-27).

These Gospel parables express the dynamic of fidelity required in the Lord's service; and through them it becomes clear that, as in a Council, the dynamic and fidelity must converge.

The hermeneutic of discontinuity is countered by the hermeneutic of reform, as it was presented first by Pope John XXIII in his Speech inaugurating the Council on 11 October 1962 and later by Pope Paul VI in his [Discourse for the Council's conclusion on 7 December 1965](#).

Here I shall cite only John XXIII's well-known words, which unequivocally express this hermeneutic when he says that the Council wishes "to transmit the doctrine, pure and integral, without any attenuation or distortion". And he continues: "Our duty is not only to guard this precious treasure, as if we were concerned only with antiquity, but to dedicate ourselves with an earnest will and without fear to that work which our era demands of us...". It is necessary that "adherence to all the teaching of the Church in its entirety and preciseness..." be presented in "faithful and perfect conformity to the authentic doctrine, which, however, should be studied and expounded through the methods of research and through the literary forms of modern thought. The substance of the ancient doctrine of the deposit of faith is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another...", retaining the same meaning and message (*The Documents of Vatican II*, Walter M. Abbott, S.J., p. 715).

It's Father Smith's Did Vatican II Really Say That Quiz!!!!

Please fill out the following quiz and learn more about Vatican II; following each question is a paragraph number from Sacrosanctum concilium to look up to learn more.

True or False

1. T F The Church says the New Mass is better than the Old Mass (4)
2. T F When a priest baptizes, it's just a human ritual (7)
3. T F When we are at Mass, it is only our community that's there (8)
4. T F Liturgy is just some fru-fru stuff we don't need to study (16)
5. T F A priest or a liturgy committee can fashion the liturgy to suit them (22)
6. T F We should recognize special groups of people at Mass (32)
7. T F Latin is abolished and Mass has to be in English (36)
8. T F Fr C. should stop trying to get us to sing and to go to coffee & donuts (42)
9. T F Liturgy talk is just old stuff that has nothing to do with real life (43)
10. T F Priests should give up trying to teach us to sing in Latin (54)
11. T F We should have the Precious Blood at every Mass (55)
12. T F The Liturgy of the Hours is not for ordinary folk (100)
13. T F Priests don't have to say their breviary in Latin any more (101)
14. T F Gregorian chant should have pride of place in liturgical services (116)
15. T F We should really buy a nice pipe organ for St Peter's (120)
16. T F Songs by Peter, Paul and Mary are totally accepted for Mass (121)

Write down the paragraph where Sacrosanctum concilium says the following

1. Vatican II got rid of indulgences (*Indulgentiarum doctrina* 1, 5)
2. We shouldn't have all this music and chanting stuff at Mass (*Musicam sacram* 5)
3. Keep it simple, stupid: music in church (*Musicam sacram* 11)
4. The choir cannot sing by themselves; they're there just to support us (*Mus. Sac.* 16)
5. We should talk in church (*Mus. Sac.* 17)
6. There is no such thing as Solemn Mass anymore (*Mus. Sac.* 27-28)
7. Latin should never be sung at a Mass with English (*Mus. Sac.* 51)
8. We can have organ solos during Lent (*Mus. Sac.* 66)
9. The Eucharistic Prayer has to be said out loud (*Eucharisticum mysterium* II.1.F1)
10. Mass times should be whenever is convenient for me, so have some more (*EM* II.C)
11. Communion rails should be ripped out of churches; we don't need them (*EM* III.D)
12. The bishops at Vatican II were in favour of Communion in the hand (*Memoriale Domini*)
13. We don't really have to kneel for the Consecration (*General Instruction* 21)
14. Black vestments cannot be used in funerals (*General Instruction* 308e)
15. If I'm in mortal sin, I can just say a prayer and go to Communion (*Eucharistiae sacramentum* 23)
16. Mass should be said facing the people (*General Instruction* 262)

The 21 Ecumenical Councils

I. FIRST COUNCIL OF NICAEA

Year: 325

Summary: The Council of Nicaea lasted two months and twelve days. Three hundred and eighteen bishops were present. Hosius, Bishop of Cordova, assisted as legate of Pope Sylvester. The Emperor Constantine was also present. To this council we owe the Nicene Creed, defining against Arius the true Divinity of the Son of God (*homoousios*), and the fixing of the date for keeping Easter (against the Quartodecimans).

Further Reading: www.newadvent.org/cathen/11044a.htm

II. FIRST COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE

Year: 381

Summary: The First General Council of Constantinople, under Pope Damasus and the Emperor Theodosius I, was attended by 150 bishops. It was directed against the followers of Macedonius, who impugned the Divinity of the Holy Ghost. To the above-mentioned Nicene Creed it added the clauses referring to the Holy Ghost (*qui simul adoratur*) and all that follows to the end.

Further Reading: www.newadvent.org/cathen/04308a.htm

III. COUNCIL OF EPHESUS

Year: 431

Summary: The Council of Ephesus, of more than 200 bishops, presided over by St. Cyril of Alexandria representing Pope Celestine I, defined the true personal unity of Christ, declared Mary the Mother of God (*theotokos*) against Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, and renewed the condemnation of Pelagius.

Further Reading: www.newadvent.org/cathen/05491a.htm

IV. COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON

Year: 451

Summary: The Council of Chalcedon -- 150 bishops under Pope Leo the Great and the Emperor Marcian -- defined the two natures (Divine and human) in Christ against Eutyches, who was excommunicated.

Further Reading: www.newadvent.org/cathen/03555a.htm

V. SECOND COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE

Year: 553

Summary: The Second General Council of Constantinople, of 165 bishops under Pope Vigilius and Emperor Justinian I, condemned the errors of Origen and certain writings (The Three Chapters) of Theodoret, of Theodore, Bishop of Mopsuestia and of Ibas, Bishop of Edessa; it further confirmed the first four general councils, especially that of Chalcedon whose authority was contested by some heretics.

Further Reading: www.newadvent.org/cathen/04308b.htm

VI. THIRD COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE

Years: 680-681

Summary: The Third General Council of Constantinople, under Pope Agatho and the Emperor

Constantine Pogonatus, was attended by the Patriarchs of Constantinople and of Antioch, 174 bishops, and the emperor. It put an end to Monothelitism by defining two wills in Christ, the Divine and the human, as two distinct principles of operation. It anathematized Sergius, Pyrrhus, Paul, Macarius, and all their followers.

Further Reading: www.newadvent.org/cathen/04310a.htm

VII. SECOND COUNCIL OF NICAEA

Year: 787

Summary: The Second Council of Nicaea was convoked by Emperor Constantine VI and his mother Irene, under Pope Adrian I, and was presided over by the legates of Pope Adrian; it regulated the veneration of holy images. Between 300 and 367 bishops assisted.

Further Reading: www.newadvent.org/cathen/11045a.htm

VIII. FOURTH COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE

Year: 869

Summary: The Fourth General Council of Constantinople, under Pope Adrian II and Emperor Basil numbering 102 bishops, 3 papal legates, and 4 patriarchs, consigned to the flames the Acts of an irregular council (*conciliabulum*) brought together by Photius against Pope Nicholas and Ignatius the legitimate Patriarch of Constantinople; it condemned Photius who had unlawfully seized the patriarchal dignity. The Photian Schism, however, triumphed in the Greek Church, and no other general council took place in the East.

Further Reading: www.newadvent.org/cathen/04310b.htm

IX. FIRST LATERAN COUNCIL

Year: 1123

Summary: The First Lateran Council, the first held at Rome, met under Pope Callistus II. About 900 bishops and abbots assisted. It abolished the right claimed by lay princes, of investiture with ring and crosier to ecclesiastical benefices and dealt with church discipline and the recovery of the Holy Land from the infidels.

Further Reading: www.newadvent.org/cathen/09016b.htm

X. SECOND LATERAN COUNCIL

Year: 1139

Summary: The Second Lateran Council was held at Rome under Pope Innocent II, with an attendance of about 1000 prelates and the Emperor Conrad. Its object was to put an end to the errors of Arnold of Brescia.

Further Reading: www.newadvent.org/cathen/09017a.htm

XI. THIRD LATERAN COUNCIL

Year: 1179

Summary: The Third Lateran Council took place under Pope Alexander III, Frederick I being emperor. There were 302 bishops present. It condemned the Albigenses and Waldenses and issued numerous decrees for the reformation of morals.

Further Reading: www.newadvent.org/cathen/09017b.htm

XII. FOURTH LATERAN COUNCIL

Year: 1215

Summary: The Fourth Lateran Council was held under Innocent III. There were present the Patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem, 71 archbishops, 412 bishops, and 800 abbots the Primate of the Maronites, and St. Dominic. It issued an enlarged creed (symbol) against the Albigenses (*Firmiter credimus*), condemned the Trinitarian errors of Abbot Joachim, and published 70 important reformatory decrees. This is the most important council of the Middle Ages, and it marks the culminating point of ecclesiastical life and papal power.

Further Reading: www.newadvent.org/cathen/09018a.htm

XIII. FIRST COUNCIL OF LYONS

Year: 1245

Summary: The First General Council of Lyons was presided over by Innocent IV; the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, and Aquileia (Venice), 140 bishops, Baldwin II, Emperor of the East, and St. Louis, King of France, assisted. It excommunicated and deposed Emperor Frederick II and directed a new crusade, under the command of St. Louis, against the Saracens and Mongols.

Further Reading: www.newadvent.org/cathen/09476b.htm

XIV. SECOND COUNCIL OF LYONS

Year: 1274

Summary: The Second General Council of Lyons was held by Pope Gregory X, the Patriarchs of Antioch and Constantinople, 15 cardinals, 500 bishops, and more than 1000 other dignitaries. It effected a temporary reunion of the Greek Church with Rome. The word *filioque* was added to the symbol of Constantinople and means were sought for recovering Palestine from the Turks. It also laid down the rules for papal elections.

Further Reading: www.newadvent.org/cathen/09476c.htm

XV. COUNCIL OF VIENNE

Years: 1311-1313

Summary: The Council of Vienne was held in that town in France by order of Clement V, the first of the Avignon popes. The Patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria, 300 bishops (114 according to some authorities), and 3 kings -- Philip IV of France, Edward II of England, and James II of Aragon -- were present. The synod dealt with the crimes and errors imputed to the Knights Templars, the Fraticelli, the Beghards, and the Beguines, with projects of a new crusade, the reformation of the clergy, and the teaching of Oriental languages in the universities.

Further Reading: www.newadvent.org/cathen/15423a.htm

XVI. COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE

Years: 1414-1418

The Council of Constance was held during the great Schism of the West, with the object of ending the divisions in the Church. It became legitimate only when Gregory XI had formally convoked it. Owing to this circumstance it succeeded in putting an end to the schism by the election of Pope Martin V, which the Council of Pisa (1403) had failed to accomplish on account of its illegality. The rightful pope confirmed the former decrees of the synod against Wyclif and Hus. This council is thus ecumenical only in its last sessions (42-45 inclusive) and with respect

to the decrees of earlier sessions approved by Martin V.

Further Reading: www.newadvent.org/cathen/04288a.htm

XVII. COUNCIL OF BASLE/FERRARA/FLORENCE

Years: 1431-1439

Summary: The Council of Basle met first in that town, Eugene IV being pope, and Sigismund Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Its object was the religious pacification of Bohemia. Quarrels with the pope having arisen, the council was transferred first to Ferrara (1438), then to Florence (1439), where a short-lived union with the Greek Church was effected, the Greeks accepting the council's definition of controverted points. The Council of Basle is only ecumenical till the end of the twenty-fifth session, and of its decrees Eugene IV approved only such as dealt with the extirpation of heresy, the peace of Christendom, and the reform of the Church, and which at the same time did not derogate from the rights of the Holy See.

Further Reading: www.newadvent.org/cathen/06111a.htm

XVIII. FIFTH LATERAN COUNCIL

Years: 1512-1517

Summary: The Fifth Lateran Council sat from 1512 to 1517 under Popes Julius II and Leo X, the emperor being Maximilian I. Fifteen cardinals and about eighty archbishops and bishops took part in it. Its decrees are chiefly disciplinary. A new crusade against the Turks was also planned, but came to naught, owing to the religious upheaval in Germany caused by Luther.

Further Reading: www.newadvent.org/cathen/09018b.htm

XIX. COUNCIL OF TRENT

Years: 1545-1563

Summary: The Council of Trent lasted eighteen years (1545-1563) under five popes: Paul III, Julius III, Marcellus II, Paul IV and Pius IV, and under the Emperors Charles V and Ferdinand. There were present 5 cardinal legates of the Holy See, 3 patriarchs, 33 archbishops, 235 bishops, 7 abbots, 7 generals of monastic orders, and 160 doctors of divinity. It was convoked to examine and condemn the errors promulgated by Luther and other Reformers, and to reform the discipline of the Church. Of all councils it lasted longest, issued the largest number of dogmatic and reformatory decrees, and produced the most beneficial results.

Further Reading: www.newadvent.org/cathen/15030c.htm

XX. FIRST VATICAN COUNCIL

Years: 1869-1870

Summary: The Vatican Council was summoned by Pius IX. It met 8 December, 1869, and lasted till 18 July, 1870, when it was adjourned; it is still (1908) unfinished. There were present 6 archbishop-princes, 49 cardinals, 11 patriarchs, 680 archbishops and bishops, 28 abbots, 29 generals of orders, in all 803. Besides important canons relating to the Faith and the constitution of the Church, the council decreed the infallibility of the pope when speaking *ex cathedra*, i.e. when as shepherd and teacher of all Christians, he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole Church.

Further Reading: www.newadvent.org/cathen/15303a.htm

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Pope Benedict XVI and the Liturgical Reform

“There is no ‘pre-’ or ‘post-’ Conciliar Church. There is but one, unique Church that walks the path toward the Lord...”

by **Helen Hull Hitchcock**

A summer institute on the thought of Pope Benedict XVI was held at Christendom College July 28-30. Speakers at the institute were Cardinal Francis Arinze, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Dr. Timothy O'Donnell, president of Christendom, Father William Saunders, Father Benedict Groeschel, Pia de Solenni, and Helen Hull Hitchcock, who presented the following address on Pope Benedict/Cardinal Ratzinger's view of the liturgical reform on July 29, 2006.

“We might say that ... the liturgy was rather like a fresco [in the early 20th century]. It had been preserved from damage, but it had been almost completely overlaid with whitewash by later generations. In the Missal from which the priest celebrated, the form of the liturgy that had grown from its earliest beginnings was still present, but, as far as the faithful were concerned, it was largely concealed beneath instructions for and forms of private prayer. The fresco was laid bare by the Liturgical Movement and, in a definitive way, by the Second Vatican Council. For a moment its colors and figures fascinated us. But since then the fresco has been endangered by climatic conditions as well as by various restorations and reconstructions. In fact, it is threatened with destruction, if the necessary steps are not taken to stop these damaging influences. Of course, there must be no question of its being covered with whitewash again, but what is imperative is a new reverence in the way we treat it, a new understanding of its message and its reality, so that rediscovery does not become the first stage of irreparable loss.”¹

This striking visual metaphor appears in the author's preface of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger's *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, as he describes the task before us of authentic renewal of the sacred liturgy - - sometimes called “the reform of the reform”.

This book, the most recent of several works on the liturgy authored by the then-prefect of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, was written in 1999, more than 80 years after Father Romano Guardini's seminal work of the same name was published in 1918. Although, as Cardinal Ratzinger wrote, he is addressing "a totally different historical situation ... in the context of our present-day questions, hopes, and dangers", his book has similar purpose: "an aid to the understanding of the faith, and to the right way to give the faith its central form of expression in the liturgy". He hopes to encourage something like the "Liturgical Movement" of the early 20th century -- "a movement toward the liturgy and toward the right way of celebrating the liturgy, inwardly and outwardly".²

In *The Spirit of the Liturgy* we can see a compendium of Cardinal Ratzinger's profound insights on the liturgy, focused on the true meaning of the sacramental mystery of the Eucharist -- a cosmic liturgy, as he describes it -- the culmination of which is nothing less than the union of God with man, with all that that implies. No one has written more extensively, compellingly or clearly on the subject of the liturgy. And this body of writing and teaching acquired even greater significance for the Church -- for every Catholic and for all believers -- when its author was elevated to the See of Peter in April 2005, as Pope Benedict XVI. (Perhaps it is no coincidence that he ascended to the papacy during the Year of the Eucharist.)

Deep concern about and critical analysis on the liturgical reform is hardly a recent development in Pope Benedict's thinking. As early as 1966, Father Joseph Ratzinger published a book of essays written after each of the Council sessions. In the epilogue, he raises questions about the difficulties in implementing the Council's liturgical reforms and of internal conflicts -- noting among the dangers that some people "seem to demand not so much truth as modernity", and the "tendency to picture everything in black and white. A positive summation of the Council", Father Ratzinger observed, "almost inevitably leads to this, by emphasizing the Council's progress and contrasting the new gains made with the much less satisfactory state of affairs prior to the Council".

He observed that,

Very much indeed did the Church need renewal from within in the new situation of today. Yet it must not be forgotten that the Church has always remained the Church, and that at any time in history the way of the Gospel could be found and was found in it...

It seems to me of first importance, especially in the time after the Council, never to forget this fact.

In the final analysis the Church lives, in sad as well as joyous times, from the faith of those who are simple of heart. This is the way that Israel lived even in the times when Pharisaic legalism and Sadducean liberalism defaced the countenance of the chosen people. Faith remained alive in those who were simple of heart. It was they who passed the torch of hope on to the New Testament. Their names are at once the last names of the old People of God and the first names of the new People -- Zechariah, Elizabeth, Joseph and Mary. The faith of those who are simple of heart is the most precious treasure of the Church. To serve and to live this faith is the noblest vocation in the renewal of the Church.³

Again, in 1975, the necessity of an authentic restoration of the “fresco” appeared in the written work of Father Ratzinger, when he observed:

“It must be clearly stated that a real reform of the Church presupposes an unequivocal turning away from the erroneous paths whose catastrophic consequences are already incontestable”.⁴ But he also stressed (ten years later, in the book-length interview with Vittorio Messori, published as *The Ratzinger Report*) that “Vatican II in its official promulgations, in its authentic documents, cannot be held responsible for this development which, on the contrary, radically contradicts both the letter and the spirit of the Council Fathers”; further, he said, “I am convinced that the damage that we have incurred in these twenty years is due, not to the ‘true’ Council, but to the unleashing within the Church of latent polemical and centrifugal forces; and outside the Church it is due to the confrontation with a cultural revolution in the West ... with its liberal-radical ideology of individualistic, rationalistic and hedonistic stamp”.⁵

The cardinal is equally emphatic that the Council did not represent a rupture, but expressed *continuity* with the Church’s history: “There is no ‘pre-’ or ‘post-’ Conciliar Church”, he writes “There is but one, unique Church that walks the path toward the Lord...”.⁶

Is he calling for restoration? He clarifies: “If by ‘restoration’ is meant a turning back, no restoration of such kind is possible. The Church moves forward toward the consummation of history, she looks ahead to the Lord who is coming... But if by ‘restoration’ we understand the search for a new balance after all the exaggerations of indiscriminate opening to the world ... well, then a restoration ... is altogether desirable...” [If restoration means] “a recovery of lost values, within a new totality, then I would like to say that this is precisely the task that imposes itself today in the second phase of the post-conciliar period... In reality it [restoration] literally means the same as the word ‘reform’”.

He notes that Charles Borromeo “is the classic expression of a real reform, that is to say, of a renewal that leads forward precisely because it teaches how to live the permanent values in a new way, bearing in mind the totality of the Christian faith and the totality of man” -- and elucidates that Saint Charles Borromeo truly rebuilt (“restored”) the Catholic Church of late 16th-century Milan, “which had been nearly destroyed... He was able to exist with his certitudes amid the contradictions of his time because he himself lived them. And he could live them because he was a Christian in the deepest sense of the word ... he was totally centered on Christ. What truly counts is to reestablish this all-embracing relation to Christ...”.⁷

A few years earlier, in *Feast of Faith* (1981), Cardinal Ratzinger had commented on the difficulty presented by the view that the Council itself intended a radical rupture with the past — a false view of the Council that, paradoxically, characterizes both extremes: those who reject the authority of the Council (e.g., Lefebvrists), and radical “progressives” who reject everything before.

Speaking of this radical distinction between “the old belief” and “the new”, the cardinal states, “I must emphatically deny such a distinction. The Council has not created any new matter for belief, let alone replaced an old belief with a new one.... [T]he really serious thing, in my view,

is this fundamental breakdown in liturgical consciousness [wherein] distinctions between liturgy and conviviality, liturgy and society, become blurred”.⁸

He points out that “liturgy can only be liturgy to the extent that it is beyond the manipulation of those who celebrate it”, and that the new books “occasionally show far too many signs of being drawn up by academics and reinforce the notion that a liturgical book can be ‘made’ like any other book”.⁹

But if the “progressivist” camp is in error in their belief that the Council somehow authorized them to “create” a new liturgy based on their own reading of the “pastoral needs” of contemporary believers, Cardinal Ratzinger is equally forceful in his critique of the opposite end of the liturgical spectrum, those who reject the “new Mass”.

Concerning the “so-called Tridentine liturgy”, he writes, there is “no such thing. The Council of Trent did not ‘make’ a liturgy”, he points out. The 1570 Missal is a revised version of the Roman Missal of about 100 years earlier, and differed only in tiny details. Pope Pius V promoted the exclusive use of the Missal to “help get rid of the uncertainties which had arisen in the confusion of liturgical movements in the Reformation period”, Cardinal Ratzinger writes, noting that an exception was made at that time for liturgies that were 200 or more years old, which were permitted to co-exist with the “new” revised Missal.

“We must say to the ‘Tridentines’ that the Church’s liturgy is alive, like the Church herself, and is always involved in a process of maturing.... The Missal can no more be mummified than the Church herself”, he writes.

He deplores that after Vatican II the “new Missal was published as if it were a book put together by professors, not a phase of a continual growth process. Such a thing has never happened before. It is absolutely contrary to the laws of liturgical growth”.¹⁰ While this is disturbing, Cardinal Ratzinger nevertheless strongly affirms that “as far as its contents are concerned (apart from a few criticisms) I am very grateful for the new Missal”, noting especially that it contains more prayers, and permits the vernacular.

“In my view”, he continues, “a new edition [of the Missal] will need to make it quite clear that the so-called ‘Missal of Paul VI’ is nothing other than a renewed form of the same Missal to which Pius X, Urban VIII, Pius V and their predecessors have contributed, right from the Church’s earliest history. It is of the very essence of the Church that she should be aware of her unbroken continuity throughout the history of faith, expressed in an ever-present unity of prayer.

This awareness of continuity is destroyed just as much by those who “opt” for a book supposed to have been produced 400 years ago as by those who would like to be forever drawing up new liturgies. At bottom, these two attitudes are identical....

The fundamental issue is whether faith comes about through regulations and learned research or through the living history of a Church which retains her identity throughout the centuries.¹¹

This caution about imprisoning the Church's worship in any particular moment of her history -- past or present -- is revisited in *God is Near Us*, here expressed with another striking image:

There is a great danger today of our churches becoming museums and suffering the fate of museums: if they are not locked, they are looted. They are no longer alive. The measure of life in the Church, the measure of her inner openness, will be seen in that she will be able to keep her doors open, because she is a praying Church. I ask you therefore from the heart, let us make a new start at this. Let us again recollect that the Church is always alive, that within her evermore the Lord comes to meet us.... The Eucharist means, God has answered: The Eucharist is God as an answer, as an answering presence. Now the initiative no longer lies with us, in the God-man relationship, but with Him.... Indeed, it is now not just two-way, but all-inclusive: whenever we pray in the Eucharistic presence, we are never alone. Then the whole of the Church, which celebrates the Eucharist, is praying with us.¹²

In a 1998 address given in Rome observing the 10th anniversary of Pope John Paul II's *motu proprio*, *Ecclesia Dei*, Cardinal Ratzinger comments on problems involving "attachment to the old liturgy" and the reason for distrust of the continuation of the old liturgical forms. In this address he notes two major objections to the Council, first that it reformed the liturgical books, and second, that it disrupted Church unity.

"First, the Council did not itself reform the liturgical books; it ordered their revision, and, to that end, set forth certain fundamental rules", he said. "Above all, the Council gave a definition of what the liturgy is, and this definition gives a criterion which holds for every liturgical celebration"; thus, "it is therefore in accordance with these criteria that one must judge liturgical celebrations, whether they be according to the old books or according to the new.... An orthodox liturgy ... which expresses the true faith, is never a compilation made according to the pragmatic criteria of various ceremonies which one may put together in an ... arbitrary way -- today like this and tomorrow like that", he said. "The orthodox forms of a rite are living realities, born out of a dialogue of love between the Church and her Lord. They are the expressions of the life of the Church in which are condensed the faith, the prayer, and the very life of generations, and which are incarnated in a concrete form -- at once the action of God and the response of man".¹³

"The authority of the Church can define and limit the usage of rites in different historical circumstances", Cardinal Ratzinger explained. "But the Church never purely and simply prohibits them. And so the Council did ordain a reform of the liturgical books, but it did not forbid the previous books".

Although "creativity" with the new *Ordo Missae* "has often gone too far", the cardinal observed, "there is often a greater difference between liturgies celebrated in different places according to the new books than there is between an old liturgy and a new liturgy when both are celebrated as they ought to be, in accordance with the prescribed liturgical texts".

Further, he stressed, "An average Christian without special liturgical training finds it hard to distinguish between a Mass sung in Latin according to the old Missal and a Mass sung in Latin according to the new Missal". And he suggests that the "aversions" to one or the other "are so

great because the two forms of celebration are thought to reflect two different spiritual attitudes, two different ways of perceiving the Church and the whole of Christian life”.

He continues his analysis in this address on *Ecclesia Dei*,

The average Christian considers it essential that the re-formed liturgy be celebrated in the vernacular and facing the people, that there be large areas for creativity, and that lay people exercise ‘active’ roles. On the other hand, it is thought essential to the old liturgy that it be celebrated in the Latin language, that the priest face the altar, that the ritual be rigidly prescribed, and that the faithful follow the Mass by praying in private, without having an active role. In this way of viewing things, certain outward phenomena are essential for a liturgy, not the liturgy in and of itself.

... But the oppositions we have just enumerated do not come from either the spirit or the letter of the Conciliar texts.

Cardinal Ratzinger continues, making specific observations about what the Constitution on the Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, did and did not say:

The Constitution on the Liturgy itself does not say a word about celebrating Mass facing the altar or facing the people. And on the subject of language, it says Latin ought to be preserved while giving greater space to the vernacular “especially in the readings and directives, and in some of the prayers and chants” [quoting SC 36.2]. As for the participation of lay-people, the Council insists first in general that the liturgy concerns the entire Body of Christ -- Head and members -- and that for this reason it belongs to the entire Body of the Church; “and, consequently, the liturgy is to be celebrated in community with the active participation of the faithful” [again quoting SC]. And the text specifies, “in the liturgical celebrations, each person, whether as a minister or as one of the faithful, should perform his role by doing solely and totally what the nature of things and the liturgical norms require of him”. (SC 28) “By way of promoting active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamation, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures and bodily attitudes. And at the proper time, all should observe a reverent silence”. (SC 30)

“These are the directives of the Council: they can provide matter for reflection for all”, Cardinal Ratzinger says, noting that “a number of modern liturgists” have tended toward a one-sided development of the directives, which results in “reversing the intentions of the Council” -- and he notes “a dangerous tendency to minimize the sacrificial character of the Mass, causing mystery and the sacred to disappear” in order to make the liturgy more easily understood. He cautions against fragmenting the liturgy by emphasizing only its communal character, and allowing the “assembly” to determine the way a liturgy should be celebrated.

He does note, in this 1998 address, that despite the current problems, “one can see evidence of a return to mystery, to adoration, to the sacred and to the cosmic and eschatological character of the liturgy” in recently established initiatives. (Cardinal Ratzinger here mentions one example, the 1996 “Oxford Declaration” in England, though he was also aware of Adoremus and the

“Society for Catholic Liturgy”, both organized in 1995 in the United States, with essentially these same objectives.)

But he also remarked that the “old liturgy” was flawed. In particular, he notes that “the celebration of the old liturgy had slipped too much into the domain of the individual and the private, and that the communion between priests and faithful was insufficient” -- that people privately recited prayers from their prayer books during most of the Mass. He suggests that these factors probably accounted for the indifference of most Catholics when the old liturgical books disappeared: “People had never been in contact with the liturgy itself”.

However, exceptions to this indifference, Cardinal Ratzinger observed, were found in places where the “Liturgical Movement had created a certain love for the liturgy [and] anticipated the essential ideas of the Council, as for example the praying participation of all in the liturgical action”.

Cardinal Ratzinger concludes this reflection on the liturgical situation concerning the “old” and “new” Mass, with a cautionary note:

When, several years ago, someone proposed “a new liturgical movement” to insure that the two forms of liturgy did not diverge too much, and to show their inner convergence, several friends of the “old liturgy” expressed the fear that this was nothing other than a stratagem or ruse to eliminate the old liturgy entirely.

Such anxieties and fears must cease! If in the two forms of celebration the unity of the faith and the unicity of the mystery should appear clearly, that could only be a reason to rejoice and thank the Good Lord.

In the measure to which all of us believers live and act according to these motivations, we can also persuade the bishops that the presence of the old liturgy does not trouble or harm the unity of their diocese, but is rather a gift destined to build up the Body of Christ, of which we are the servants.

So, dear friends, I would like to encourage you not to lose patience — to keep trusting — and to find in the liturgy the force needed to give our witness to the Lord for our time.**14**

I have quoted so extensively from this speech of Cardinal Ratzinger, given eight years ago to a group of supporters of the “old Mass” gathered in Rome to observe the 10th anniversary of *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta*, the document by which Pope John Paul II established the *Ecclesia Dei* commission to address the concerns of Catholics attached to the “old Mass”**15**, because I think it encapsulates what Cardinal Ratzinger means when he speaks of the “reform of the reform”, and why this is a major concern. In fact, Pope John Paul II’s *motu proprio* alludes to this task of “reforming the reform” of the liturgy through a “renewed commitment” to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. He wrote:

a) The outcome of the movement promoted by Archbishop Lefebvre can and must be, for all the Catholic faithful, a motive for sincere reflection concerning their own fidelity to the Church’s

Tradition, authentically interpreted by the ecclesiastical Magisterium, ordinary and extraordinary, especially in the Ecumenical Councils from Nicaea to Vatican II. From this reflection all should draw a renewed and efficacious conviction of the necessity of strengthening still more their fidelity by rejecting erroneous interpretations and arbitrary and unauthorized application of doctrine, liturgy, and discipline.

To the bishops especially it pertains, by reason of their pastoral mission, to exercise the important duty of a clear-sighted vigilance full of charity and firmness, so that this fidelity may be everywhere safeguarded.

However, it is necessary that all the pastors and other faithful have a new awareness, not only of the lawfulness but also the richness for the Church of a diversity of charisms, traditions of spirituality and apostolate, which also constitutes the beauty of unity in variety; of that blended “harmony” which the earthly Church raises up to Heaven under the impulse of the Holy Spirit.

b) Moreover, I should like to remind theologians and other experts in the ecclesiastical sciences that they should feel called upon to answer [questions] in the present circumstances. Indeed, *the extent and depth of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council call for a renewed commitment to deeper study in order to reveal clearly the Council’s continuity with Tradition, especially in points of doctrine* which, perhaps because they are new, have not yet been well understood by some sections of the Church.**16**

Later that same year, Pope John Paul reaffirmed the fundamental importance of the Council’s Constitution on the Liturgy, in an Apostolic letter on the 25th anniversary of *Sacrosanctum Concilium, Vicesimus Quintus Annus***17**, which explicitly urged a “renewal in accord with Tradition”, emphasizing the historic continuity of the Missal, and reaffirming the “guiding principles” of the Constitution. He also noted “difficulties” and “erroneous applications”:

It must be recognized that the application of the liturgical reform has met with difficulties due especially to an unfavorable environment marked by a tendency to see religious practice as something of a private affair, by a certain rejection of institutions, by a decrease in the visibility of the Church in society, and by a calling into question of personal faith. It can also be supposed that the transition from simply being present, very often in a rather passive and silent way, to a fuller and more active participation has been for some people too demanding. Different and even contradictory reactions to the reform have resulted from this. Some have received the new books with a certain indifference, or without trying to understand or help others to understand the reasons for the changes; others, unfortunately, have turned back in a one-sided and exclusive way to the previous liturgical forms which some of them consider to be the sole guarantee of certainty in faith. Others have promoted outlandish innovations, departing from the norms issued by the authority of the Apostolic See or the bishops, thus disrupting the unity of the Church and the piety of the faithful, and even on occasion contradicting matters of faith. (VQA 11)

Pope John Paul expressly called for a stability of liturgical books and a diagnostic and corrective review of vernacular translations:

For the work of translation, as well as for the wider implications of liturgical renewal for whole countries, each episcopal conference was required to establish a national commission and ensure the collaboration of experts in the various sectors of liturgical science and pastoral practice. *The time has come to evaluate this commission, its past activity, both the positive and negative aspects, and the guidelines and the help which it has received from the episcopal conference regarding its composition and activity.* (VQA 20 – emphasis added)

Furthermore, in this 1988 letter, Pope John Paul II called for genuine liturgical renewal -- a “reform of the reform”, so to speak:

The time has come to renew that spirit which inspired the Church at the moment when the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* was prepared, discussed, voted upon and promulgated, and when the first steps were taken to apply it. The seed was sown; it has known the rigors of winter, but the seed has sprouted, and become a tree. It is a matter of the organic growth of a tree becoming ever stronger the deeper it sinks its roots into the “soil” of tradition. (VQA 23)

There is, I believe, a rather remarkable similarity in the perspectives of Pope John Paul II and then-Cardinal Ratzinger — and these passages reveal the strong parallel in their views of the need for a thorough re-evaluation of the post-Conciliar liturgical reform, and to make necessary corrections, which must grow organically from authentic tradition.

As Pope John Paul II stated in a 1984 address to a Congress of Liturgical Commissions in Rome, the objective of this effort is so that the “Liturgy on earth will fuse with that of heaven. Where ... it will form one choir ... to praise with one voice the Father through Jesus Christ”.**18**

These same themes emerge repeatedly throughout the copious writings on the Liturgy of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger — as we have seen in his own books, in *Feast of Faith* (1981), in *The Ratzinger Report* (1985), in *A New Song for the Lord* (1995-96), in *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (1999), in *God is Near Us* (2001); as well as in talks and essays -- and this impressive list does not begin to exhaust his work on this subject as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

It would be simplistic to reduce his profound teaching on the liturgy and his call for renewal and reform of the liturgy to a few concrete examples -- notably, restoring beauty and nobility to music in the liturgy, as well as to sacred imagery and church architecture; accurate translation of liturgical texts and increased use of Latin in during the celebration of Mass; a revival of devotion to the Eucharist in adoration; or a return to the tradition of the priest facing “*ad orientem*” (liturgical East) together with the people, and bodily posture and reverent silence as a necessary form of “active participation” of the people -- though he has spoken and written compellingly, sometimes in great detail, about all of these.

Early this year, a few months after the Synod on the Eucharist at the close of the Year of the Eucharist, there was speculation that Pope Benedict would soon state that there are no restrictions of any kind on the celebration of Mass according to the 1962 Missal -- that no priest need request permission from his bishop for this. Some now speculate that this universal permission may appear in a post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation.

I do not propose to predict what the pope may say on this point. He did observe, after a meeting early this summer with the committee of “relators” who presented their summary of the Synod’s final Propositions, that he awaited their final version -- that he hopes “that I shall soon see and be able myself to learn from this text, which can then be published for the benefit of the whole Church that is eagerly expecting it.... And this text which is being drafted will be one such intervention to nourish the People of God with the food of the truth, to help them grow in truth and especially to make known the mystery of the Eucharist and invite them to an intense Eucharistic life”.¹⁹

Although Pope John Paul II customarily issued an Apostolic Exhortation following such Synods, it is not required; and in 1985, the post-synodal propositions were not accompanied by an Apostolic Exhortation. Concerning his predecessor’s last works on the Eucharist, the encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* of 2003, and *Mane Nobiscum Domine*, which inaugurated the Year of the Eucharist in 2004-2005, Pope Benedict recently commented, “what more can be said?”

Speaking to an assembly of Communion and Liberation in August 2002, Cardinal Ratzinger focused on the power of beauty, and its necessary relationship to the truth of Christ. This beauty is to be found in the authentic heritage of liturgical music and art anchored in the Church’s history and tradition, and which should help us to transcend our narrow and limited experience of the world, drawing us to the source of Truth. In this address, he said:

Being struck and overcome by the beauty of Christ is a more real, more profound knowledge than mere rational deduction. Of course we must not underrate the importance of theological reflection, of exact and precise theological thought; it remains absolutely necessary. But to move from here to disdain or to reject the impact produced by the response of the heart in the encounter with beauty as a true form of knowledge would impoverish us and dry up our faith and our theology. We must rediscover this form of knowledge; it is a pressing need of our time.... Nothing can bring us into close contact with the beauty of Christ Himself other than the world of beauty created by faith and light that shines out from the faces of the saints, through whom His own light becomes visible.²⁰

As Pope Benedict XVI, he focuses on God’s love and love of God as the source of this light. In his first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, he makes it clear that this link is essential to comprehending the meaning of the Eucharist -- and must profoundly inform the way we worship.

Speaking of Jesus Christ as the incarnate love of God, he again stresses the “co-penetration” of the Old Testament and the New Testament, wherein Christ gives flesh and blood to the concept of God’s love:

His death on the Cross is the culmination of that turning of God against Himself, in which He gives Himself in order to raise man up and save him. This is love in its most radical form.... Jesus gave this act of oblation an enduring presence through His institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper.... The Eucharist draws us into Jesus’ act of self-donation.... The imagery of marriage between God and Israel is now realized in a way previously inconceivable: it had meant standing in God’s presence, but now it becomes union with God through sharing in Jesus’ self-gift, sharing in His Body and Blood. The sacramental “mysticism”, grounded in God’s

condescension towards us, operates at a radically different level and lifts us to far greater heights than anything that any human mystical elevation could ever accomplish.²¹

Even this brief quote from *Deus Caritas Est* explains the pope's continuing urgency about the authentic restoration of the endangered "fresco" (to return to his metaphor). It is through the Eucharist that we may be opened to God's Love. Beauty and solemnity in the way we celebrate the liturgy -- through expressions of music, gestures, visual art, words -- is profoundly important in order that we may at least approach an understanding of the real gift, Christ, who is the fullness of Life and Love.

The Eucharist is the door, the entryway, through which we may encounter this overwhelming Truth -- a truth that is changeless, is not conformed to this world, yet penetrates our fallen and unstable world so that it may be transformed, renewed, perfected.

"The Catholic liturgy is the liturgy of the Word made flesh -- made flesh for the sake of the resurrection", he wrote in *The Spirit of the Liturgy*.²² We must see that whatever impedes the transmission of this Truth, this Beauty, this Love, through the Divine action must be removed, re-formed -- and whatever enhances it, makes it more transparent to our clouded minds, must be recovered, renewed.

"The faith of those who are simple of heart is the most precious treasure of the Church", as then-Father Ratzinger wrote 40 years ago. "To serve and to live this faith is the noblest vocation in the renewal of the Church".²³

We are the beneficiaries of the faith of our fathers. The faith of our children -- and our children's children -- depends on each of us. We must do our best to get it right.

Notes:

1 Preface, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*. Ignatius 2000, p. 7, 8.

2 Ibid.

3 Joseph Ratzinger, *Theological Highlights of Vatican II*. New York: Paulist Press-Deus Books, 1966, p. 184, 185.

4 Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger with Vittorio Messori, *The Ratzinger Report*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 1985, (quoted) p. 30.

5 Ibid. p. 30.

6 Ibid. p. 35.

7 Ibid. p. 38-39; fn 5.

8 Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *The Feast of Faith*. Ignatius, 1981, p. 84, 85.

9 Ibid. p. 85.

10 Ibid. p. 85, 86.

11 Ibid. p. 87.

12 *God is Near Us*. Ignatius, 2001, p. 90.

13 Ratzinger, Ten years after the publication of *Ecclesia Dei* (address given in Rome, October 24, 1998, English trans. by Father Ignatius Harrison, accessible online <http://www.unavoce.org/tenyears.htm>).

14 Ibid.

15 The Ecclesia Dei commission was instituted by Pope John Paul II July 2, 1988, “for the purpose of facilitating full ecclesial communion of priests, seminarians, religious communities or individuals until now linked in various ways to the Fraternity founded by Archbishop Lefebvre, who may wish to remain united to the Successor of Peter in the Catholic Church while preserving their spiritual and liturgical traditions, in light of the Protocol signed on May 5 last by Cardinal Ratzinger and Archbishop Lefebvre”. (ED 6a)

(<http://www.adoremus.org/EcclesiaDei.html>)

16 Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia Dei Adflicta*, 5 a, b (emphasis added).

17 Pope John Paul II, *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, December 4, 1988.

18 Pope John Paul II, Address to the Congress of Presidents and Secretaries of National Liturgical Commissions, 6. 1984, quoted in VQA 23.

19 Pope Benedict XVI – Address to the Members of the 11th Ordinary Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, June 1, 2006. (Vatican web site)

20 The Feeling of Things, the Contemplation of Beauty, (Address to C&L, August 2002.)

21 Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, December 25, 2005, 13, 14.

22 The Spirit of the Liturgy, p. 220.

23 See note 2.

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