

**THE
GREAT
BETRAYAL**

SOME THOUGHTS ON
THE INVALIDITY OF THE NEW MASS

Hugh Ross Williamson

(1970)

DEDICATION

To the Roman Catholic Hierarchy of
England and Wales

THE Gospel, the “Good News of Jesus Christ,” is the fact of the Resurrection. By rising from the dead, God Incarnate reversed the process of Nature and gave a new dimension to existence. Instead of death and decay, which seemed to be the inevitable end of all things, there was now seen to be Eternal Life.

The Apostles were the men who could bear first-hand witness to this unique phenomenon, who could say: “I saw Him and talked with Him and learnt from Him and touched Him and ate with Him after He had risen from the dead,” men who went untroubled to their own deaths at the hands of unbelievers “in the sure and certain hope of resurrection.”

Today, when to most people “gospel” means nothing more than one of the accounts of certain episodes in Christ’s life, and “apostle” a peregrinary white-bearded teacher of the first Christian century, it is almost impossible to realize the impact of this Good News of the abolition of death which was (and is) “to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness.” Though it is the basis of the Christian faith, it is not even believed by a large body of nominal Christians who substitute for it a sentimental interest in social amelioration — a concern for *this* world on the principle that “death ends everything” —and pay only lip-service to the fact of Resurrection to eternal life.

Before He died and rose again, Christ had given His disciples the conditions for inheriting Eternal Life. He taught in the synagogue at Capernaum, the day after He had given a hint of the manner of the Eucharist-to-be by feeding five thousand people on five loaves and two small fishes which He had blessed; “Unless you eat My flesh and drink My blood, you have no life in you. Whoso eats My flesh and drinks My blood has Eternal Life and I will raise him up at the last day.”

And from that time, it is recorded, many of His followers left Him, saying: “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” The teaching was altogether too absurd! And there is at least this to be said for those pre-Crucifixion Protestants who deserted Him — that He had not explained the transubstantiation by which they were to be enabled to eat Him. That instruction was reserved for the twelve

Apostles who were with Him in an upper room in Jerusalem the night before He was executed as a criminal. And when He took the bread and blessed it and said: “*This is My Body*” and the wine and said: “*This is My Blood*,” there must surely have been, among other emotions, a sense of relief that His “hard saying” in the synagogue at Capernaum was at last made clear.

From one point of view, the Church is the organization formed to protect the truth that the passport to Eternal Life is the Mass. Other sacraments can be seen as guarding the central one. In baptism, by symbolically and sacramentally sharing Christ’s death, we become eligible for resurrection and, original sin obliterated, are in the state of purity necessary so that we do not “eat and drink to our own damnation.” The sacrament of penance allows us, by absolution, to return to that state after we have committed actual sin. The sacrament of Holy Order is the guarantee that the miracle of transubstantiation will be effected by a priest set apart for that purpose, who is in direct succession to the original Apostles and whose ministrations are thus valid.

In the centuries-long assault on the Mass by the forces of evil, the attack has sometimes been directed at, so to speak, the “outworks” — at the Apostolic Succession or at Auricular Confession — but the main battle has eventually concentrated on the Mass.

In the earlier centuries, the heretical emphasis was on a denial of the Incarnation. The question whether the bread and wine became truly the Body and Blood was secondary to the question whether God had taken — or, indeed, could take — a human body. What may be called *the* heresy, because from the first century until today it has been the root of most of the other heresies, held that He could not have done so, because all matter was evil. Spirit, which was “good,” could not inhabit flesh, which was “bad.” This Gnosticism under various names troubled the Church from the very early years when Justin Martyr made “the Resurrection of the Body” the Christian battle-cry against the Gnostic “the immortality of the soul” and warned the faithful: “If you fall in with those who speak of the immortality of the soul, you will know they are *not* Christians.”

The most dangerous and widespread recrudescence of Gnosticism was that in the Europe of the thirteenth century. It was then known as Catharism, the religion of “the Pure,” and to save Christendom from this Puritanism St. Dominic and his Order of Preachers fought it by argument and Simon de Montfort opposed it by an armed Crusade.

Though it was checked, it was not destroyed and it handed on to later Puritanism the insistence that “matter” was “evil” and that transubstantiation was therefore not to be thought of. By isolating from its context a verse in the New Testament — “God is spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth” — the Puritans, then and now, implicitly denied the point that the uniqueness of Christianity is precisely that God is flesh which hung on a cross and rose from a tomb.

They could not, any more than their successors at the Reformation, get rid of a Communion service, because it was too well attested in Scripture; but they, again like their successors, emptied it of all orthodox meaning. The Cathar “consecration prayer” in their service of the Supper ran; “O Lord Jesus Christ, who didst bless the five loaves and two fishes in the wilderness and, blessing water, turned it into wine; bless, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, this bread, fish and wine, not as a sacrifice or offering, but in simple commemoration of the Most Holy Supper of Jesus Christ and his disciples.”

Here is the basis of all later heretical developments in the doctrine of the Eucharist, the repudiation of oblation and sacrifice.

One of the Church’s replies to the menace of Catharism was the institution in 1285 of the recitation, by the priest, on his way back from the altar to the sacristy, of the Last Gospel. His genuflection at “the Word was made flesh” was the guarantee that he was not a secret Cathar and that in the Mass he had just celebrated his intention was to effect transubstantiation. Nor was the choice of the Prologue to St. John as the passage to be read irrelevant to the issue. This was originally a Gnostic hymn which had been Christianized by the interpolation of the historical verses referring to John the Baptist and

Jesus and by the addition of “and the Word was made flesh,” which destroyed the whole basis of the heresy.

When, after nearly 700 years the reading of the Last Gospel was abolished in 1965 on the ground that it was not in the “primitive rite” (how could it have been?) those with any knowledge of theology and history knew also that the heretical attack on the Mass had begun again in our days.

The Fourth Lateran Ecumenical Council which met in 1215 was attended by 400 bishops, 800 abbots and priors and the representatives of the monarchs of Christendom. Its work included a definition of transubstantiation and a formal condemnation of the Cathars. Under its impetus, throughout the thirteenth century devotion to the Blessed Sacrament increased. The feast of Corpus Christi was instituted and given liturgical shape by St. Thomas Aquinas who wrote for it his famous hymns. Processions and, in the fourteenth century, Expositions of the Blessed Sacrament became popular.

But side by side with Catholic adoration there were increased heretical attacks. In England, John Wyclif, and in Bohemia his disciple, John Hus, denied that Christ’s words meant what they said and asserted that “This is My Body” was to be interpreted in some such sense as “This means my body” — thus preparing the way for later Protestant ingenuity which in 1577 resulted in the publication of a book in Germany containing 200 different interpretations of the words “Hoc est Corpus Meum.”

Both Wyclif and Hus, while denying the Body and Blood, supported their central attack by subsidiary ones. Wyclif denied the Apostolic Succession and the right of priests to consecrate, by teaching that only “good” men could preside at the Supper; while Hus demanded communion in both kinds to contradict the orthodox doctrine that under the appearance of bread alone, as under the appearance of wine alone, we receive Christ whole and entire, because Christ is not divided so that in the Host we receive one part of Him and in the Chalice another. The purpose of the demand for

“both kinds,” then and now, was and is to deny the Sacrifice of the Mass and to assert the “memorial Supper.”

* * * *

In the sixteenth century, the anti-Catholic forces became grouped around the three great heresiarchs, Luther, Zwingli and Calvin. Although they taught different doctrines and referred to each other in unflattering terms, they were united in their hatred of the “never-sufficiently-to-be-execrated Mass.” Adopting most of the Eucharistic heresies of the past and adding some new ones of their own, they led what is known as the Reformation.

Of the method of Archbishop Cranmer’s destruction of the Mass in Protestant England, I have already written in *The Modern Mass*. Here the more relevant consideration is his conduct before his death in the reign of Mary Tudor when Catholicism was restored. Cranmer, with two other leading Protestants, Ridley and Latimer, asked to be allowed to debate the subject of transubstantiation with Catholic theologians. The request was granted and a public debate was held in Oxford on three propositions:

1. that, in the Eucharist, by virtue of Christ’s words spoken by a priest, the Body and Blood of Christ are truly present under the forms of bread and wine:
2. that after the consecration there remains no substance of the bread and wine or any other substance but the Body and Blood;
3. and that the Mass is a Sacrifice, available to both the living and the dead for the propitiation of their sins.

After three days of argument, the Protestants were driven to repudiate the authority of the Lateran Council, “because it did not agree with God’s Word.” This attitude was, for them, a logical necessity, yet it took the Catholics, both those who were engaged in argument and the students and theologians who were listening, by surprise.

“What!” said the Prolocutor, “you do not acknowledge the Lateran Council?”

“No”, said the Protestants, “we do not acknowledge it.”

There was nothing more to be said, for this repudiation of what was undoubtedly the mind of Christendom was also a repudiation of the very idea of the development of the Church.

As Karl Adam puts it in *The Spirit of Catholicism*:

Catholicism cannot be identified simply and wholly with primitive Christianity, in the same way that a great oak cannot be identified with the tiny acorn. There is no mechanical identity, but an organic identity. The Gospel of Christ would have been no living Gospel if it had remained for ever the tiny seed of A. D. 33 and had not struck root and grown up into a tree.

But this was the one thing that the sixteenth century Protestants could not admit and, to counter it, they used, if they did not actually invent, that absurd theory of history which one historian has actually called “Hunt the Acorn.” That is to say, when you see a magnificent oak, you start to search for an acorn similar to that from which it grew and say: “Don’t pay any attention to the tree, because *this* is what it ought to be like.”

In addition to being so self-evidently silly — who would advocate, for instance, that the House of Commons should go back to being a Witanagemot and meet at Kingston-on-Thames? — this theory was also patently dishonest. It did not mean that primitive practice was followed in detail. It only meant that details were selected from primitive practice which were useful for discrediting contemporary custom.

It so happened that the Reformers found what they wanted in some early records. In the year 150 A. D. Justin Martyr wrote a letter to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius in an effort to convince him that the Christians were not engaged in criminal activities at their service.

The conditions and surroundings of the Mass that Justin describes are those of a Church living daily under the shadow of persecution, and thus with everything reduced to a minimum of simplicity. His account is not likely, in fact, to be any more representative of the

normal worship of the early Church than a letter written from an air-raid shelter in the middle of World War II would give a picture of normal life in twentieth century England.

But Justin's letter gave the Protestants the excuse they sought, and it had the additional advantage for them that it described the celebrant as the "president," since the use of the word "priest" would give the Emperor a wrong impression by its association with the pagan Roman priesthood.

On the basis of their absurd theory with its dishonest selectivity and its reliance on a single letter written on a particular occasion for a particular purpose, the Protestants invented their "true Christianity" and proceeded to have their Communion Service in the vernacular, to substitute a table for an altar, to make their churches as bare as possible, removing all statues, and to limit the Eucharist to a Memorial Meal in which the celebrant was a "president" who sat at the Table facing the people.

Because the Faithful had always been accustomed to the Mass as a Sacrifice, an equivocal phrase — "sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving," still used in the Anglican Prayer Book — was introduced to give the simple the impression that even in those strange new surroundings the Sacrifice was still acknowledged.

To meet the spread of heresy at the Reformation, an Ecumenical Council was again summoned. It met at Trent. It confirmed the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council three centuries earlier and it promulgated others, so that the Tridentine definitions — from Tridentum, the Latin equivalent of Trent — still are the official formulation of the Catholic Faith.

On the main question of the Sacrifice of the Mass, it confirmed the age-long doctrine: "If any one says that the Mass is only a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving but not a propitiatory Sacrifice; or that it profits only the recipient and that it ought not to be offered for the living and the dead for sins, punishments, satisfactions and other necessities, let him be anathema."

After the Council of Trent was over, Pope St. Pius V drew up a Roman Missal which should safeguard for the whole Church the so-

much-attacked faith. There is no need for me to describe it, for it is the Missal that has been in general use until the beginning of Lent this year, 1970.

This Tridentine Mass was enacted by St. Pius by his *Quo Primum* on July 19th, 1570.

“We determine and order by this our decree,” wrote the saint, “to be valid in perpetuity that never shall anything be added to, omitted from or changed in this Missal. Specifically do we warn all persons in authority, of whatever dignity or rank, Cardinals not excluded, and command them as a matter of strict obedience never to use or permit any ceremonies or Mass prayers other than those contained in this Missal.

“At no time in the future can a priest ever be forced to use any other way of saying Mass. And in order once for all to preclude any scruples of conscience and fear of ecclesiastical penalties and censures, we declare herewith that it is by virtue of Our Apostolic Authority that we decree and prescribe that this present order of ours is to last in perpetuity and that never at a future date can it be revoked or legally amended.

“And if, nevertheless, anyone should ever dare attempt any action contrary to this order of ours, handed down for all time, let him know that he has incurred the wrath of Almighty God and of the blessed apostles, Peter and Paul.”

And so the Tridentine Mass stood, a perpetual bulwark against heresy until, on April 3rd, 1969, the present Pope, Paul VI, in his Apostolic Constitution, *Missale Romanum*, set it aside to introduce in its place a vernacular Mass, conformable with the practice and principles of Protestantism, to be celebrated on a table by a priest facing the people and known as “the President.”

The English reactions to the New Mass were immediate. The Pope’s instruction appeared in translation on May 10th, 1969, and on May 17th the Latin Mass Society sent a petition to the Holy Father asking for a retention of the Tridentine Mass according to the Missal of St. Pius V. And when in September Cardinals Ottaviani and Bacci presented to the Pope a critical study of the New Mass prepared by a

company of leading European theologians, pointing out that it “represents as a whole and in its details a striking departure from the Catholic theology of the Mass,” the Latin Mass Society immediately made an English translation, and sent it personally to every bishop, priest and head of a religious Order in England.

The Hierarchy forbade priests to take any notice of the scholars’ analysis and the majority of the 7,000 copies went, presumably, straight into clerical waste-paper baskets.

In this important work, the theologians pointed out, with a wealth of scholarship, that:

1. the New Mass was substantially rejected by the Episcopal Synod;
2. had never been submitted to the collegial judgment of the Episcopal Conferences;
3. was never asked for by the people;
4. that it has every possibility of satisfying the most modernist of Protestants;
5. that, by a series of equivocations, it obsessively places the emphasis on the “supper” instead of the Sacrifice;
6. that no distinction is allowed to remain between Divine and human sacrifice;
7. that bread and wine are only “spiritually,” not substantially, changed;
8. that the Real Presence of Christ is never alluded to and belief in it is implicitly repudiated;
9. that the position of both priest and people is falsified so that the celebrant appears as nothing more than a Protestant minister, while the true nature of the Church is intolerably misrepresented;
10. that the abandonment of Latin sweeps away finally all unity of worship and may have its effect on unity of belief;
11. and that, in any case, the New Order has no intention of standing for the Faith as taught by the

Council of Trent to which the Catholic conscience is bound. In fact, it teems with insinuations or manifest errors against the purity of the Catholic religion and dismantles all defenses of the deposit of Faith.

The Vatican, as well as the English and Welsh Bishops, seem to have been presuming on a combination of theological ignorance and blind obedience to get the New Mass accepted without argument. They had done their best to avert suspicion by introducing the changes gradually. As Cardinal Heenan wrote in his Pastoral Letter of October 12th, 1969:

Why does the Mass keep changing? Here is the answer. It would have been foolhardy to introduce all the changes at once. It was obviously wise to change gradually and gently. If all the changes had been introduced together, you would have been shocked.

The following month, Cardinal Heenan wrote as the foreword to the English translation of the New Mass:

Wise Pope Paul VI has decided that the time has come to end experiments. He is satisfied that the form of the Mass will not need to be altered again in the foreseeable future . . . It is important to realize that the revision has been carried out under the Holy Father's personal supervision. There can be no question of its containing false doctrine.

This, of course, implies that whatever a Pope chooses to do or say is, *ipso facto*, right. Such an attitude to the Holy Father suggests a pagan oracle, rather than the Catholic teaching that a Pope is infallible only when speaking to the entire world on a question of faith and morals but that, in speaking to any audience less than the whole world and on any subject other than faith or morals, he is as fallible as anybody else.

The fallibility, indeed, is the safeguard of the infallibility; and to suppose that a Pope cannot and does not err is to expose the Faith to

the kind of contemptuous criticism which led, for example, Lytton Strachey, misunderstanding the doctrine of infallibility, to write:

John XXII asserted in his Bull *Cum inter nonnullos* that the doctrine of the poverty of Christ was heretical. His predecessor, Nicholas III, had asserted in his Bull *Exiit qui seminat* that the doctrine of the poverty of Christ was the true doctrine, the denial of which was heresy. Thus, if John XXII was right, Nicholas III was a heretic. On the other hand, if John was wrong — well, he was a heretic. And in either case, what becomes of Papal Infallibility?

But, of course, Papal Infallibility is not in question here. There is only the conflict between two men, the truth of which is to be settled by the usual process of theological argument. In the same way, the setting aside by Paul VI of St. Pius V's ruling is a matter affording the Faithful a choice between the opinions of two men; and considering that St. Pius was defending Catholicism from the very Protestantism which, it cannot seriously be disputed, is inherent in the New Mass, the choice should not be too difficult. For, as Professor Gordon Rupp, one of the foremost Lutheran scholars, said at Cambridge on March 12th, 1970, speaking of the Vatican's reputed intention of quashing the excommunication of Luther:

It seems to be a logical step to take in view of the fact that the Vatican Council agreed with so much of Luther's theology for which he was condemned.

Paul VI himself seems to have been surprised at the extent of the resistance to the New Mass, and on November 19th and 26th he made two allocutions, which were published in the English editions of *L' Osservatore Romano* for November 27th and December 4th, 1969. In them he defended the New Mass. He asserted that "the Mass of the New Rite remains the same Mass we have always had." He claimed that the new form was "Christ's Will," thus suggesting infallibility without claiming it. He explained that the changes were intended to draw worshippers "from their usual torpor" and "help to make the Mass a peaceful but demanding school of Christian

sociology.” He described Latin as “the language of the angels” and offered as a slight consolation to those ordinary people, who were no longer allowed to hear it as the nineteen-centuries-old language of the Mass, that it would still be used for “the Holy See’s official acts.” And he ordered: “Do not let us talk about the New Mass. Let us rather speak of the New Epoch in the Church’s life.”

At this point it is necessary to ask the question which is and must for long have been in everyone’s mind: Why? We have all watched the Vatican’s dismantling of the Faith with a growing sense of incredulity. This cannot be really happening. It must be a nightmare from which we shall shortly awake to find all the old sanctities untouched. In any case, why should the Pope and the Bishops act thus?

For the answer, we must make a short diversion into the subject of “ecumenism.”

When Pope John XXIII on 25th January, 1959, announced “an Ecumenical Council,” non-Catholics, according to Cardinal Bea (in an article published in 1961),

... thought that there was question of a Council which would bring together the representatives of all the Christian communities to discuss the question of unity. This interpretation was founded on the meaning of the word “ecumenical,” used today to signify the coming together of all religious groups that call themselves Christian. This meaning of the term, to designate the representatives of all the Christian denominations, grew up together with the “ecumenical movement” and only in the last century. The misunderstanding was quickly cleared up.

The Cardinal was too optimistic. The misunderstanding was not cleared up. It is still not cleared up. Many still imagine that because Vatican II, like every General Council of the Church, was Ecumenical in the canonical sense (that is to say, composed of the Catholic bishops of the *oikoumene*, the world in communion with the Apostolic See), it was also “ecumenical” in the Protestant sense of the term.

But Protestant ecumenism is a most deadly heresy. Not only is it indifferentism — any religion is as good as any other — but it denies the reality of the Church. It teaches that the True Church does not yet exist, but that it will come into being some time in the future by pooling the various “insights” of various Christian communities. The World Council of Churches, co-ordinating 239 sects, is its representative body.

The Catholic Church has, so far, resisted the pressure to commit the final apostasy of joining the World Council of Churches and, in so doing, proclaiming that it is just one among other churches, but, under Paul VI it has consented to send observers and the Protestants were unofficially (in the sense of clandestinely) consulted in the making of the New Mass.

The activities of the World Council of Churches, aided by the continuing confusion between the classic Catholic use of *Ecumenical* and the Protestant “ecumenical movement,” forced Vatican II, for the sake of clarification, to issue a decree on Ecumenism. In spite of a charity which might easily be mistaken for compromise, this document, if carefully examined, will be found to safeguard the Faith. It lays down that:

1. all Christian communities outside the Catholic Church are “defective;”
2. that “only through the Catholic Church of Christ can the means of salvation be reached in all their fullness;”
3. that “the unity bestowed by Christ on His Church at the beginning is still in existence in the Catholic Church;”
4. and that the Catholic Church alone possesses “the wealth of the whole of God’s revealed truth and all the means of grace.”

It supports the great Encyclical of Pius XII on the nature of the Church, *Mystici Corporis*, which ruled that “only those are to be accounted really members of the Church who have been regenerated

in the waters of baptism and profess the true faith and have not cut themselves off from the structure of the Body by their own unhappy act,” i. e. by being confirmed in a non-Catholic sect, and by insisting that “in itself baptism is only a beginning, an introduction . . . oriented to the complete profession of faith, the complete incorporation in the institute of salvation, as Christ wanted, the complete integration into the fellowship of the Eucharist.”

De Œcumenismo is thus a decree *against* the Protestant Ecumenical Movement, made necessary by the double-meaning of the word “ecumenical;” but the Dogmatic Constitution has become more and more disregarded as bishops invite heretics and schismatics to preach in Catholic pulpits, and encourage other activities which blur the distinctiveness of the Catholic Faith.

In particular, they tend to emphasize that baptism unites all Christians in the faith, but omit the equally important truth, laid down by *Mystici Corporis*, that the adult adherence to a non-Catholic sect breaks that relationship established by baptism, since “schism, heresy or apostasy are such of their very nature that they sever a man from the body of the Church.”

As the Vatican appeared to move nearer to the World Council of Churches, it became necessary to bring the New Mass into line with Protestant ecumenism; and for this purpose the very words of consecration said by Christ Himself were altered. Instead of saying that His blood was to be shed “for many,” He was made to say “for all.” “This evil and dangerous doctrine of “the final salvation of all mankind,” so absolutely at variance with the Church’s teaching and so opposed to the clear teaching of Christ Himself, is the actual cornerstone of the whole edifice of heresy promoted today under the guise of “ecumenism.” *

Heretical attempts had been made in earlier centuries to substitute “all” for “many” and they had been condemned by St. Thomas Aquinas himself. The alteration contradicts Christ’s words at the Last Supper: “Lord, I pray not for the world, but for those whom

* This quotation is from P. H. Omlor’s essay, *The Ventriloquists (Interdum*, 24 February 1970) to which I am indebted for the facts about Dr. Jeremias which follow.

thou has given me . . . neither pray I for these alone but for them also who shall believe in me through their word” — the prayer defining the exclusive nature of the Church. The world is saved by coming into the Church and all men, of course, have that chance of salvation. But all men do not take it. By their own free wills, they exclude themselves. The substitution of “all” for “many” fosters the ecumenical idea that all men’s sins will be forgiven, regardless of creed or character.

The history of the alteration is instructive. The Pope, in his allocution of 19th November, 1969, to which I referred earlier, announced that the changes “had been thought out by authoritative experts of sacred liturgy.” He omitted to mention that among those consulted were two Anglicans, a Lutheran, a Calvinist and a representative of the World Council of Churches, or that the expert responsible for the “all” was Dr. Joachim Jeremias, a non-Catholic professor at the University of Göttingen, who has attacked the Divinity of Christ.

Dr. Jeremias, in his book *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, published in 1966, invented the ingenious theory that when Christ said “for many” He meant “for all,” because Aramaic does not possess any word meaning “all.” Thus, the argument was transferred from theology which, since the Council of Trent had expressly rejected and repudiated “for all men,” was dangerous ground even for skilled equivocators, to philology.

However, the argument was quite unsound. Not only does the passage: “All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing” (Daniel IV, 32) exist in the original Aramaic, but *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic* (published in 1961) devotes an entire section to the Aramaic word for “all,” “everybody,” and “everyone.”

The “official” explanation of this particular point in the New Mass is, like so many of them, what the simple man, unacquainted with episcopal methods of thought, would call a lie. Its importance here is that, in altering the words of Christ, *it surely makes every vernacular Mass invalid*, beyond any possibility of argument.

As the Latin versions of the new Canons of the Mass still retain “pro multis” and have not yet changed it to “pro omnibus,” this easily-seen reason for invalidity does not apply to them. They, however, seem none the less invalid, but before examining the reason it may be well to say a word about the Canon of the Mass, because our ecclesiastical authorities are misleading the laity by pretending that it is no more than 400 years old.

The way in which the change has been presented to the English may be summarized by Cardinal Heenan’s sentence in the Foreword to the *Westminster Mass Book*:

Words and actions which, four hundred years ago, appealed to the Elizabethans can hardly meet the mood of men in the twentieth century.

But, on the contrary, the Canon of the Mass goes back without any alteration at all to the early Christian centuries. It was already established before St. Augustine brought Christianity to Britain, and the Canon he used in the first Mass he said in Kent consisted of precisely the same words in the same language as have been used in every Mass said in the 1,373 years between then and the abolition of it in February, 1970.

What the Tridentine reform of St. Pius V revised and unified were occasional prayers and rituals which had grown up in certain localities. It did not touch — as they had not touched — the Canon, which had the changelessness of Christ.

Trent itself stressed the continuance. It declared:

The Catholic Church, in order that the Holy Sacrifice may be offered in a dignified and reverent way, established the sacred Canon centuries ago, so pure and free from all error that nothing is contained in it which does not, in the greatest way, inspire, sanctify and raise the mind to God.

Luther, on the other hand, spoke of it as

. . . that abominable Canon which is a confluence of slimy puddles. They have made of the Mass a sacrifice. They have

added offertories. The Mass is not a sacrifice. It is not the act of a sacrificing priest. With the Canon, we discard all that implies an oblation.

One of the chief architects of the New Mass, Rev. Annibale Bugnini, appears to endorse this judgment when he speaks of Luther's famous *Formula Missae* of 1523 as a *Missa Normativa*. Certainly the design of the New Mass, with its destruction of the age-old Canon, embodies Lutheran principles.

As long as the Tridentine Canon remained, it was impossible to subvert the intention of the Mass. Consequently, the ecumenists had to impose alternative Canons. One of these, Canon II, was framed in such a way that any Protestant minister or lapsed priest who denied transubstantiation could say it.

First of all, it got rid of all mention of oblation, as Luther had recommended. The reason for this is explained simply by a theologian in the *Courrier de Rome* (No. 49, p. 6):

As Christ rose from the dead to die no more, He cannot in the Mass be put in any state whatever of a victim. He can only be the Victim mystically under the species of bread and wine. The bread and wine come in, therefore, as integral parts of the Sacrifice.

Having got rid of the offertory, and the Oblations set apart, the compilers of Canon II fell back on Cranmer's trick in framing a prayer not that the bread and wine might be made the Body and Blood, but that "they may be *unto us** the body and blood" — a formula which he described as intended specifically to deny transubstantiation.

So, in Canon II, the formula, "Let your spirit come upon these gifts to make them holy so that they may become for us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ," makes it possible for any of the member sects of the World Council of Churches to use it as their communion service. This "ecumenical" intention surely destroys its validity.

* It is true that the Tridentine Canon also contains *nobis*, but, because of the great oblationary prayers which precede, the meaning is quite different. See *The Modern Mass*, p. 19.

Also, the validity of the other Canons would thus appear to be equally destroyed.

I have heard people say that, because Father So-and-So undoubtedly believes in transubstantiation, his celebration will, because of his intention, be valid. This is to misunderstand “intention.” The personal belief of the priest has no part in it. If it had, the fact that Talleyrand was a professed atheist would have invalidated all his ordinations and there would be today no certain orders anywhere in France. What is asked of the priest is simply that he should intend what the Church intends. This principle explains, for example, why a Muslim woman could perform a valid Christian baptism, provided she says the appointed words, does the appointed actions and, though herself disbelieving, intends to do what the Church intends.

As the Church has, by framing Canon II so that it can be construed to deny transubstantiation, made its “ecumenical” intention incontrovertibly clear, it seems to follow that all the new Canons are invalid and that no priest, however sound his theology and however passionate his devotion, *can* say a valid Mass.

So stark and appalling a conclusion has presented the great body of the faithful with an almost intolerable strain. It has even led some to the conclusion that an invalid Mass is valid if only it is said in Latin. They have formed an Association for Latin Liturgy, against which the faithful should be warned, not because it has any standing, but because the Hierarchy, to the further confusion of the simple, might seem to patronize it by appearing to grant a Latin Mass.

It cannot be too much emphasized that there is no certainly valid Latin Mass available in the West at the moment but the Tridentine Rite of St. Pius V, which he tried to safeguard in perpetuity.

Our bishops, forbidding this rite, call on our “obedience.” But they must surely know that obedience to conscience takes precedence of everything, and that obedience cannot be commanded for something wrong. Even in military life, a soldier can no longer plead obedience to a superior as an excuse for committing a crime. What the bishops mean by “obedience” is mindless regimentation —

the kind of obedience which the apostate priests of the first Reformation gave to their apostate bishops, among whom there was only one who defended the Faith — St. John Fisher. At the moment, there is no St. John Fisher.

The defense of the Church, in the face of the great betrayal by the ecclesiastics, devolves on the laity who should be active in pursuing the policy which is already coming into effect in various places — providing a priest to say the Tridentine Mass and devoting to his upkeep all the money they would normally give to their local church. As we are back to the Catacombs, the celebration can be held in private houses.

There can be no possible censures for this. It was for this eventuality that St. Pius decreed: “At no time in the future can a priest ever be forced to use any other way of saying Mass.” It would, in the end, be impossible to accuse of schism those who continued to use the form of Mass sanctified by the centuries. It is the ecumenists who would be the schismatics.

Some may feel that this course, by possibly reducing the numbers of the Church, is, for that reason, open to the gravest objections. They tend to think of events in terms of the line from the hymn, “Like a mighty army moves the Church of God,” and see it as growing all the time numerically stronger.

But because the Gospel must indeed be preached to the whole world, it by no means follows that the whole world will receive it. If there is one thing on which Christ Himself, the Apostles and the Fathers insisted, it was that the Church on Earth will be reduced to a very small remnant. We have been warned on the highest authority of a “falling away,” that “the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine,” and that “if it were possible the very elect” will be deceived.

An American priest, Father Lawrence Brey, writing of our present condition, asks whether the introduction of the New Mass is

. . . the beginning of an age of new darkness on the Earth and the harbinger of an unprecedented crisis within the Church? Was the Blessed Virgin’s indication that the Rosary and her

Immaculate Heart would be our “last and final weapons” a hint that somehow the Holy Mass would at some point become no longer available to most Catholics?

Now that this has happened some people, pending the organization of Tridentine Masses, say the Rosary followed by the reading of the Mass in their old missals, accompanied by an unfaltering, even passionate, intention to make a communion of desire, since they can no longer make one in fact. One can only pray that the days of this improvised necessity will, by God’s grace, be shortened.

In conclusion, I must insist that this necessity in England is entirely the doing of our bishops. The Tridentine Mass, by the Pope’s order, is not to be generally abolished until November 1971, unless the local Hierarchy chooses to forbid it. If our episcopate were to restore, or permit the alternative use of, the Tridentine Mass until Advent 1971, so that the matter could be thoroughly examined and debated, it is possible that it would not be abolished at all. Eighteen months of honesty might work wonders.

As a last word, may I commend to the Hierarchy of England and Wales the words with which Father Messenger concluded his review of a book on Anglican Orders almost as full of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi* as various episcopal pronouncements on the New Mass:

I would appeal to the author to take this matter more seriously, not only for his own sake but for that of others also. It is a serious thing to deceive and delude souls for whom Christ died.

London, Palm Sunday 1970.