

The new Eucharistic prayers of Paul VI's liturgical reform

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The introduction by the Venerable Congregation of Rites, on 23 May 1968, of three new anaphora or Eucharistic prayers is a significant event in the history of the Roman liturgy. The uniqueness of the Roman Eucharistic prayer, the Roman Canon, was one of the notable characteristics of the liturgy of Rome, along with the favour it accorded to private Masses, or also the sacred silence with which it covered this canon.

I would like to point out that we are today in a place that is historic in this regard. It was in fact in the chapel of the Institute where we are today, *the Maria Santissima Bambina Institute*, that on 20 and 22 October 1965, during the last session of the Council, a revised canon was tried out (the new Eucharistic prayers would be tried out on 24 October 1967, during the first ordinary assembly of the Synod of Bishops, but this time in the Sistine Chapel).

I have two comments to make about the Roman canon:

- The name *canon* given to this unique Eucharistic prayer refers to the fixed series of *orationes* that make up the Roman anaphora, just as there were *canons*, fixed series of psalms in the Office. The term gives a sense of intangibility to the heart of the Roman liturgy.
- Furthermore, the oldest attestation of the Roman canon, that of Saint Ambrose's *De Sacramentis* at the end of the 4th century (390)², not only suggests that it is the only Eucharistic prayer known to readers, but is also inserted into a catechesis on the reality of the presence of the Body and Blood of Christ³. The first mention of the Roman Canon therefore presents it as a confession of Eucharistic faith. This role as a Eucharistic *Credo* was confirmed by Trent⁴.

¹ Lecture given at the 14th CIEL Colloquium, Rome, 30 January 2025.

² Its attribution to Saint Ambrose has been unanimously accepted since the work of Dom Hugh Connolly ("The *De Sacramentis* a Work of St Ambrose," *The Downside Review*, Volume 59, 1, January 1941). It was questioned by Hervé Savon, in *Studia Ambrosiana* 6, 2012 (pp. 23-46), who questioned it on stylistic grounds (rather than on substantive grounds, as was once argued by those who believed that the Eucharistic theology of *conversio* contained in the DS was too elaborate to be by St Ambrose). However, Hervé Savon does not propose another attribution or a later date (we can guess that he would like to delay it by a century) and has not been followed by anyone.

³ Ambrose of Milan, *Des sacrements, des mystères*, Cerf, "Sources chrétiennes", n. 25 bis, 1961, pp. 114 ff.

⁴ "For many centuries, the Catholic Church has instituted the holy canon, so pure of all error that there is nothing in it that does not breathe extreme holiness and piety and lift up to God the spirits of those who offer it" (XXII^e session, Dz 942).

How was this innovation introduced? The process is typical of how liturgical reform worked.

1. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*

A recurring debate questions the relationship between *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the conciliar text discussed and voted on first, and the liturgical reform that followed⁵. This is a false debate. The text voted on by the Council Fathers was decidedly reformist, without being revolutionary in itself: it was a compromise text, opening up new possibilities. Thus, the famous passages concerning Latin, which are all the more important for our subject since the question of the decline of Latin was decisive for the transformation of the heart of the Mass:

- n. 36: "1. The use of the Latin language, except for special rights, will be retained in Latin rites. 2. However, whether in the Mass, in the administration of the sacraments, or in other parts of the liturgy, the use of the local language can often be very useful for the people."
- n. 54: "The vernacular may be given its proper place in Masses celebrated with the participation of the people [in accordance with article 36...] But if in some places a more extensive use of the local language in Mass seems appropriate, the provisions of article 40 of this Constitution shall be observed [in different places and circumstances, it is urgent to adapt the liturgy more deeply]."

For the revision of the Mass ritual: "We shall omit what, over the centuries, has been repeated or added without much usefulness; we shall restore, according to the ancient norm of the Holy Fathers, certain things that have disappeared under the ravages of time, insofar as this appears appropriate or necessary" (n. 50).

The constitution was the first conciliar text adopted by the assembly. It was adopted during the second session, on 4 December 1963, by an overwhelming majority: 2,147 votes in favour, against 4. Given the importance that the rejection of the liturgical reform that followed the conciliar text subsequently took on, the almost complete absence of negative votes is very surprising. This can be explained by the fact that, during the discussion in the first session of 1962, the conciliar minority had not yet organised itself structurally, since the creation of *the Coetus Internationalis Patrum* did not take place until the first intersessional period that followed. More likely, this minority did not grasp the significance of the openings, expressed in very general terms, practised by the text, whose wording was very general: the text of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* remained faithful

⁵See: Alcuin Reid, *The Organic Development of the Liturgy*, Saint Michael's Abbey Press, London, 2004.

to the outline that had been approved, despite their reluctance, by the conservative cardinals Cicognani and Larraona, who successively headed the Congregation of Rites. Above all, during this second session, those who might have raised reservations about *Sacrosanctum Concilium* were primarily concerned with blocking the doctrine of episcopal collegiality in what would become the constitution *Lumen Gentium*.

The fact remains that the Council Fathers – to varying degrees, depending on their respective sensibilities – clearly accepted that the Roman liturgy should be reorganised and rethought. The openings made by *Sacrosanctum Concilium* were ultimately considerable. Judge for yourself from this one, one of the most daring, which aimed to change the setting of the date of Easter, and which was never implemented: "The Holy Council does not oppose the fixing of the feast of Easter on a specific Sunday in the Gregorian calendar, with the consent of those concerned, especially our separated brethren."

2. The *Consilium ad exsequendam Constitutionem de Sacra Liturgia* opens the canon to translations

Just over a month after the promulgation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, its implementation began. The *motu proprio Sacram liturgiam* of 25 January 1964 established the Commission for the Application of the Constitution on the Liturgy, chaired by Cardinal Lercaro, until 9 January 1968, when he was replaced by Cardinal Benno Gut, former abbot primate of the Benedictines, who on the same day became Prefect of the Congregation of Rites in place of Cardinal Larraona. The Secretary of *the Consilium*, Monsignor Bugnini, also became Secretary of the Congregation, which became the Congregation for Divine Worship the following year, in 1969.

The debate on the liturgical language had been very lively within the Preparatory Commission and during the conciliar discussions, and had resulted in the compromise text I have just quoted. It must be understood that the appearance of the new Eucharistic prayers is closely linked to the disappearance of Latin.

The *Consilium* wanted, at least initially, to keep the canon and the preface in Latin. However, the Latin preface, between the introductory dialogue and *the Sanctus* in the vernacular, seemed strange. Pressure from the episcopal conferences finally overcame Paul VI's hesitations: on 27 April 1965, a letter from the Secretariat of State announced that the Pope was leaving the decision on the translation of the preface to the discretion of the episcopal conferences. In France, "progressive" priests had already been saying Mass entirely in French since 1964, including the canon and consecrations.

In Holland, a very progressive country after Vatican II⁶, liturgical initiatives became increasingly subversive, with the canon already being recited largely in Dutch. Recited and modified. For the need to adapt the Roman canon had become a common idea. Thus, the Swiss theologian Hans Küng wrote: "It is also urgent to reform the canon itself. [...] In the eyes of other Christians too, any reform that stopped short of the canon, without giving the Eucharist and the account of its institution the expression they need, would be a superficial reform"⁷. The changes that the canon underwent in the Dutch translations were so significant that one could already speak of new Eucharistic prayers. These did not fail to appear as such: by 1966, 50 "wild" Eucharistic prayers were already in circulation⁸.

And according to a process that would become customary, in order to regulate the phenomenon, that is, to try to prevent "unauthorised" translations and outright inventions, on 31 January 1967, in a letter from Cardinal Lercaro, the *Consilium* granted the Dutch episcopate the faculty to introduce the vernacular into the canon (and also into the rite of ordinations and the lessons of the Divine Office). All episcopal conferences that requested it would have the same faculties. This was confirmed by the instruction *Tres abhinc annos* of 4 May 1967. Since the official and definitive translation could take some time, a letter from Fr. Bugnini to the presidents of the episcopal conferences allowed for *the interim* use of "one of the translations already in use" (without specifying whether these were the daily missals of the faithful or those that had been recently composed and were circulating among priests). On 14 June 1971, a *Notificatio* from the Congregation for Divine Worship confirmed the possible use of vernacular languages throughout the Divine Office and the entire Mass.

The transition to vernacular languages was therefore effectively completed before the last session of the Council, legally speaking, although it had only recently been finalised. Liturgical Latin had had its day, and the uniqueness of the Roman Eucharistic prayer was soon to follow, with celebrants, following a natural inclination, introducing variations, personal inflections and glosses into the canon they recited in the vernacular. Moreover, the official preparation of new Eucharistic prayers had already begun.

⁶ In 1966, the Dutch Bishops' Conference published *the iconic Dutch Catechism*, the *Nieuwe Katechismus*.

⁷ Hans Küng, *Le Concile éprouve de l'Église*, Seuil, 1963, pp. 112, 119.

⁸ Luc Perrin, "Des curés tridentins aux nouveaux curés" (From Tridentine Priests to New Priests), in *Nicole Lemaitre, Michel Lagrée, Catherine Vincent, Luc Perrin, Histoire des curés (History of Priests)*, p. 414.

3. The end of the uniqueness of the Roman Eucharistic prayer in May 1968

It so happened that the explosion at the heart of the Roman liturgy, the canon of the Mass, took place in May 1968!

As I have already said, it was in 1965 that a revision of the Roman canon was drawn up under the auspices of *the Consilium* and tested during the fourth session of the Council, with rehearsals on 20 and 22 October, *here* in the chapel of the Maria Santissima Bambina Institute. Before the end of Vatican II, therefore, the Roman Canon was no longer inviolable. However, rather than transforming it, it was decided to add other *preces eucharisticae*.

In June 1966, at the request of Paul VI himself, the *Consilium* set about preparing new prayers⁹. A first draft was presented to him on 3 May 1967. A rehearsal of a "normative Mass" was held on 24 October 1967, this time in the Sistine Chapel, in the presence of the bishops who had come to Rome, who were not enthusiastic¹⁰. Admittedly, the addition of three new Eucharistic prayers was approved by 127 of the 187 Synod Fathers. But when asked if they liked the Mass as a whole, only 71 responded *placet*, yes, 43 responded *non placet*, no, and 62 responded *placet juxta modum*, yes, subject to modifications. Among those dissatisfied were the heads of Roman dicasteries.

A year later, the final texts were ready: on 23 May 1968, Ascension Day, the Congregation of Rites published three new anaphora or Eucharistic prayers to be added to the Roman Canon and eight new prefaces. The French version was prepared so that it could be used from 15 August onwards.

Thus ended the sacrosanct uniqueness of the Roman Eucharistic prayer. Cardinal Gut himself noted that the Roman canon "certainly existed at the beginning of the 5th century; since the beginning of the 7th century, it has remained virtually unchanged¹¹. In truth, it is even quite possible that the Roman Eucharistic prayer has always been unique, since the Roman cult has used Latin, that is, since the time of Pope Cornelius in the middle of the 3rd century. *De Sacramentis*, as we have said, acts as if it were the only known prayer. Annibale Bugnini described it as a "rigid mono-expression" and welcomed the diversity of Eucharistic prayers as "a return to authentic tradition,

⁹Aimé-Georges Martimort, "The role of Paul VI in liturgical reform," in *The role of G.B. Montini in liturgical reform*, Pubblicazioni dell'Istituto Paolo VI, Brescia, 1987, p. 68.

¹⁰Annibale Bugnini, *La riforma liturgica (1948-1975)*, Edizione Liturgiche, Rome, 1983. *The Reform of the Liturgy (1948-1975)*, Desclée de Brouwer, pp. 374-375.

¹¹Instruction of 2 June 1968 to the presidents of the episcopal conferences.

overcoming a deplorable impoverishment, a typical product of centuries of liturgical decadence"¹² . After fifteen or perhaps seventeen centuries of decadence, Bugnini finally arrived.

The Roman Canon became Eucharistic Prayer I, with a few changes to the narrative of the Institution.

Prayer II was similar to the reconstruction that had been made of Hippolytus' anaphora¹³ . Regarding this elaboration, Matthieu Smyth writes in "The Anaphora of the So-Called 'Apostolic Tradition' and the Roman Eucharistic Prayer"¹⁴ : "We can safely place the final draft of our anaphora in the first half of the fourth century, somewhere between western Antioch and Palestine, or perhaps further north towards Asia Minor [...] The Western liturgy, for its part, was not influenced by this anaphora. [...] It inspired the *Præx eucharistica II of the Consilium*] on the basis of the supposed Roman and ancient origins of this document, which Dom Botte defended so passionately. What a paradox for a document that in reality had never had any connection with *the Urbs* and which in many respects was less ancient than the Roman canon, the authentic Eucharistic prayer proper to the Church of Rome! [...] The *Præx eucharistica II* is in fact an original, colourful composition, the fruit of the creativity of the *Consilium* experts who took the anaphora of *the Diataxeis* as their starting point. Its features, freed from their Syro-Western structure and all their archaisms, are now almost unrecognisable, but faithfully reflect the concerns of a small group of liturgists in the mid-20th century.

The speed with which it was adapted to conform to the other prayers is astonishing. Father Bouyer confessed: "By chance, I discovered, in a writing, if not by Hippolytus himself, certainly in his style, a felicitous formula on the Holy Spirit that could serve as a transition, of the *Vere Sanctus* type, to the brief epiclesis. Botte, for his part, produced an intercession more worthy of Paul Rebooux

¹²Annibale Bugnini, *La riforma liturgica (1948-1975)*, Edizione Liturgiche, Rome, 1983. *The Reform of the Liturgy*, op. cit., p. 480.

¹³It is taken from the *Apostolic Tradition* or *Tradition of Hippolytus* which, after a brief prologue, gives guidelines and prayers for ordination, with a sample Eucharistic prayer for the new bishop, who may substitute his own words. Based on the surviving translations, which differ considerably, adaptations made in other ecclesiastical constitutions, and a few Greek fragments, Gregory Dix (*The Treatise on the Apostolic Tradition of St Hippolytus of Rome, Bishop and Martyr*, reprinted by Routledge, 2017) and Bernard Botte (Hippolyte de Rome, *La Tradition apostolique d'après les anciennes versions*, Cerf, "Sources chrétiennes" no. 11, 1969, introduction, translation and notes by Bernard Botte) have attempted to reconstruct the original Greek. However, many uncertainties remain, particularly with regard to determining what changes were made later. It is far from certain that the *Tradition of Hippolytus* is the work of Hippolytus of Rome, a priest or bishop of the early 3rd century. In any case, it bears no resemblance to the later Roman liturgy. The document may have originated in Alexandria or Syria. It is not even certain that the *Tradition of Hippolytus* simply reports a Eucharistic prayer from the 3rd century. Its influence was mainly Eastern (for example, the prayer of consecration of the bishops of the Copts and Western Syrians develops that of the *Tradition of Hippolytus*). But this reconstructed *Tradition of Hippolytus* was very popular in the 1960s, because it gave the illusory impression that the same formulas were used as by Christians in the 4th century to celebrate the Eucharist or consecrate a bishop (Paul Bradshaw, *La liturgie chrétienne en ses origines*, Cerf, 1995, p. 91). It thus inspired Eucharistic Prayer II and the form of consecration of bishops in the liturgical reform of Vatican II.

¹⁴. *Revue des Sciences Religieuses*, 2017, no. 1, pp. 95–118.

and his *À la manière de...* than of his own knowledge. But I cannot reread this implausible composition without thinking back to the terrace of the Transtévère bistro where we were able to fine-tune our task, so that we could present ourselves with it at the Bronze Gate at the hour set by our regents"¹⁵.

Prayer IV developed, before the consecration, a synthesis of the history of salvation, inspired by the Antiochian tradition.

Prayer III, on the other hand, was purely a composition of the liturgists of *the Consilium*.

In these four prayers (including the first), the account of the Institution was slightly modified: the words taken from 1 Corinthians (11:24) *quod pro vobis tradetur* were added to the consecration of the bread; the conclusion of the consecration of the wine became *Hoc facite in meam commemorationem* (Lk 22:19), instead of *Hæc quotiescumque feceritis, in mei memoriam facietis*); and the *mysterium fidei* in the middle of the consecration of the wine was moved to after the consecration as a formula of appeal for the acclamations of the people.

In the aforementioned instruction, Cardinal Gut specified that all of these innovations responded to the conciliar prescription calling for "a general restoration of the liturgy" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 21). "If we consider," he wrote, "the variety [in the East] of anaphora in the tradition of the universal Church and the value of each of them, we realise that a single anaphora cannot contain all the pastoral, spiritual and theological richness that is desirable." Except that the three new anaphora did not have the antiquity of the Eastern anaphora, but were largely new fabrications, the publication of which attempted to stem the composition of "wild" prayers. This was unsuccessful, however, quite the contrary: "This liturgical enrichment, far from stopping the proliferation of wild Eucharistic prayers, perhaps only increased it, with the connivance of certain bishops," noted Aimé-Georges Martimort¹⁶.

In *Le Monde* on 16 August 1968, religious columnist Henri Fesquet, considered in France as "the pope of religious information", published an article entitled: "For the first time in fifteen centuries, the 'Roman Canon' may be replaced by three other Eucharistic prayers", a step "considered by some to be revolutionary". He added: "However, it should be noted that this is only a first step."

¹⁵. Louis Bouyer, *Mémoires*, Cerf, 2014, p. 199.

¹⁶. Aimé-Georges Martimort, "The role of Paul VI in liturgical reform," in *The role of G.B. Montini in liturgical reform*, Pubblicazioni dell'Istituto Paolo VI, Brescia, 1987, p. 68.

4. The new Eucharistic prayers

On 6 November 1968, Paul VI approved the new *Ordo Missæ*. The parts that did not appear in the new missal, such as the biblical readings, had been approved in advance. It was promulgated by the apostolic constitution *Missale romanum* on 3 April 1969. The *typical* edition of the new missal was published by virtue of the decree of the Congregation for Divine Worship of 26 March 1970. It was followed by an amended edition in 1971, then a second typical edition in 1975, taking into account the abolition of the subdiaconate (Paul VI's apostolic letter in the form of a *motu proprio*, *Ministeria quædam*, dated 15 August 1972, abolished the tonsure and the subdiaconate) and making a few minor changes, and finally a third typical edition in 2002, followed by an amended edition in 2008.

The 1969 missal contained 47 prefaces, the number of which subsequently doubled, instead of the 11 in the Tridentine missal, and four Eucharistic prayers, three of which were new, to which others were added. It is very difficult to know how many there are, as some were granted for a specific occasion (the Swiss Synod of 1974) or for a specific country, with the Congregation doing what it could to provide guidance. For example, there was a Eucharistic prayer for special circumstances in German, French and Italian. The Congregation, by decree of 6 August 1991, gave a Latin text as the typical edition, without the previous vernacular texts appearing to have been repealed.

In total, there are now officially eleven Eucharistic prayers to choose from (or fourteen, if the prayers for special circumstances are considered as four separate prayers, as in the 2002 missal):

- four main ones;
- two for reconciliation;
- three for children's Masses;
- one for gatherings¹⁷ ;
- and one for special circumstances, from which four prefaces may be chosen:
 - The Church journeying towards unity;
 - God guides his Church on the path to salvation;
 - Jesus, the Way to the Father;
 - Jesus, model of charity;

to which correspond four intercessory prayers (the equivalent of *the Te igitur* in the Roman Canon) placed in the second part of the Eucharistic Prayer, after the consecration, as in Eucharistic Prayers II, III, and IV.

But there are others, because some episcopal conferences, particularly on special occasions, have requested approval for specific Eucharistic prayers. Thus, the Brazilian Bishops' Conference obtained approval for an anaphora, known as the Eucharistic Prayer of Manaus, which became the fifth prayer for Brazil. It has the unusual feature, at least among the authorised anaphora, of being dialogical¹⁸ .

Oriental Eucharistic prayers could have been used, since it was their diversity that was invoked to give greater richness to the Roman liturgy: certainly there is only one anaphora in the Armenian rite or the Syro-Malabar rite, but two in the Byzantine rite, and about ten in the Syrian rite of Antioch, which are invariable in themselves (unlike the Roman canon, which has slight variations depending on the feast day). One could have also used the anaphora from the liturgy (Mass) of St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil, St. Gregory, or St. Cyril. But Roman prayers were

¹⁷In France, it is almost systematically chosen by the organisers of diocesan synods, but often with additions listed by Arnaud Join-Lambert (*op. cit.*): in Annecy, an intercession for parishes and newly elected delegates was added; in Évry: "...all, women and men, young and old, priests, deacons, lay people, religious men and women, activists, regular and occasional practitioners"; in Limoges: "May our gaze not stop at the bread and wine placed before you, make us be reborn again and again and do not let us freeze your breath in lifeless structures, etc."; in Le Mans, the preface was replaced by a great prayer of praise listing the people and events for which we could thank God: "Thank you for the Council, the biblical and liturgical renewal"; etc.

¹⁸<https://www.catolicoorante.com.br/oeucaristicas.html#V>: *Priest*: Lord, you who have always wanted to be very close to us, to live with us in Christ, to speak to us with him, send your Holy Spirit, so that our offerings may be transformed into the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. *People*: Send your Holy Spirit! [...] *Priest*: We remember, O Father, at this moment, the Passion of Jesus, our Lord, his Resurrection and his Ascension; we want to offer this bread that nourishes and gives life, this wine that saves us and gives us courage. *People*: Receive, Lord, our offering! *Priest*: And when we receive bread and wine, his body and blood are offered, the Spirit unites us into one body, to be one people in his love. *People*: The Spirit unites us into one body! Etc."

desired, and so they were composed by the members of *the Consilium*, except for part of the second one, which is very likely not Roman.

For the three new prayers, an epiclesis was inserted before the consecration, which was almost identical: *Haec ergo dona, quaesumus, Spiritus tui rore sanctifica ut nobis Corpus et Sanguis fiant Domini nostri Jesu Christi* (II^e). This epiclesis is modelled on the *Quam oblationem* of the Roman Canon, which is addressed to the Father ("Sanctify this offering... that it may become the Body and Blood of your Son"), but replaces the action of the Father with that of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the *Quam oblationem* of the Roman canon has been *epiclesed*, so to speak. Curiously, some of the other prayers (for children, for reconciliation, etc.) imitate the new epiclesis, while others imitate the old *Quam oblationem*

In reality, the notion of *epiclesis* (invocation with deep inclination for the power of God to descend or for the sacrifice to rise up to him) does not necessarily refer to an invocation of the Holy Spirit. The true Roman epiclesis seems to be the *Supplices te rogamus*: "Bring these offerings by the hands of your holy Angel to your altar in heaven." We speak of the "epiclesis of communion", an invocation to obtain union between the altar on earth and the altar in heaven, unlike the "epiclesis of consecration" in Eastern liturgies, where God is asked to invest the holy species with the power of his Spirit.

In total, if we consider the first three anaphora, we have a brief and conceptually simple Prayer II, a fairly developed Prayer IV, which claims to be of the Antiochian type and provides a summary of the history of salvation, with an identical preface, and an intermediate Prayer III, which can be adopted in all circumstances.

We are no longer in the sober and solemn rhythm of the Roman canon, although there is a certain similarity that invites comparison. But the many other Eucharistic prayers are not immune to blandness, which is accentuated by the vernacular languages. Thus, in French, in the Eucharistic prayer for special circumstances: "[Jesus] who stands among us when we are gathered in his name: as he did for his disciples in the past, he opens the Scriptures to us and shares bread with us." Or, in the first Eucharistic prayer for children's assemblies: "One evening, just before his death, Jesus was eating with his Apostles. He took bread from the table. In his prayer, he blessed you [Father]. Then he shared the bread, saying to his friends:...". In the second prayer for children: "Yes, most gracious Father, this is a celebration for us; our hearts are full of gratitude". And further on: "He came to tear from the hearts of men the evil that prevents friendship, the hatred that prevents happiness." And again in the third anaphora for children: "We can meet and talk together. Thanks to you, we can share our difficulties and our joys."

The 14 new Eucharistic prayers, not counting the prayers granted to certain countries, and of course not counting the wild prayers¹⁹, are a very important element of the innovative aspect of *the new Ordo Missæ*. They certainly do not have the doctrinal impact that the removal of the traditional Offertory and its emphasis on sacrifice had, but with the introduction of new anaphora, along with that of the vernacular languages—the two changes, let us repeat, worked in concert—the Roman Mass was revolutionised by introducing into its heart a profound novelty, variability, and, it must be said, poverty.

They were imposed because the liturgical reform took place as a process that characterised the entire conciliar reform and was not open to discussion. However, it was this attack on the exclusive nature of the Roman canon that was most unpopular with moderate reformers, such as those in the Curia, who wanted reform, but wise and controlled reform. These new anaphora thus aroused very strong opposition in the entourage of Paul VI, who himself did not seem entirely convinced. This opposition came notably from Cardinal Seper, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. And it is almost certain that they caused the disgrace of Annibale Bugnini.

When it was established on 8 May 1969, the Congregation for Divine Worship absorbed the *Consilium ad exsequendam Constitutionem de Sacra Liturgia*, whose secretary, Annibale Bugnini, became secretary of the Congregation. As a result, the Congregation itself became the direct target of criticism from all those who were dissatisfied. In a very gloomy climate, as it was clear that the reform was not working, it was met with rejection in a world that was structured around its radical opposition to the new liturgy. It was overwhelmed on its left by initiatives of all kinds, and it had to constantly justify its actions on its right by unsuccessfully attempting to repress abuses.

From 1967 to 1977, the Substitute Secretary of State, Giovanni Benelli, head of the reformists, a long-time confidant of Paul VI, and who had become a veritable prime minister, attempted a general reorganisation, especially in the liturgy. The Congregation for Divine Worship was in his sights. One of the points of conflict was therefore the question of Eucharistic prayers, with "unauthorised" Eucharistic prayers continuing to proliferate and certain episcopal conferences increasing their pressure to be able to create them.

¹⁹In the early 2000s, when Cardinal Lustiger was still Archbishop of Paris, in certain churches (Saint-Hippolyte, St-Bernard-de-Montparnasse), the order of Sunday Masses was purely composed, with prefaces and Eucharistic prayers that were invented.

Paul VI's growing distancing from Bugnini was undoubtedly influenced by Fr. Bouyer's attacks on "creativity" in matters of anaphora²⁰. Aimé-Georges Martimort believed that this conflict was the cause of Monsignor Bugnini's disgrace, accused of not having made Paul VI's reservations (styled by Benelli) known to his colleagues, who continued to work on creating new prayers²¹. In any case, the last act of the Congregation that can be described as Bugniniian was indeed the concession of Eucharistic prayers for Holland and Belgium on 19 June 1975, after a particularly stormy meeting of the *plenaria* (the assembly of cardinal members of the Congregation), a joint meeting attended by members of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Cardinal Seper strongly opposed Bugnini. Despite the negative opinion of the assembly, Bugnini managed to have the concession presented to the Pope. And Paul VI, a man who was hesitant if ever there was one, a Hamlet, as they said, nevertheless validated the new prayers, even though he was practically decided to part ways with Bugnini.

Cardinal Knox, Archbishop of Melbourne, became Prefect of Divine Worship on 25 January 1974. On 11 July 1975, the Congregation was merged with the Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments (in 1984, the two Congregations were separated again and then merged once more in 1988). It was a punitive decision, a way of bringing it into line with the other Roman dicasteries. But above all, this merger was accompanied by the disgrace of Annibale Bugnini. Antonio Innocenti, Secretary of the Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments, became Secretary of the new Congregation, while Annibale Bugnini was not given any assignment (six months later, he would be appointed pro-nuncio to Iran). But while Bugnini left, the Eucharistic prayers remained.

²⁰Louis Bouyer: "Liturgical improvisation in the early Church," *La Maison-Dieu*, 1972 (111), pp. 457-469.

²¹A.-G. Martimort, "Le rôle de Paul VI dans la réforme liturgique" (The role of Paul VI in liturgical reform), *loc. cit.*, pp. 68-69. We have seen above the complexity of the attitude of L. Bouyer, a repentant reformer.