

Ecclesiology through the liturgical books¹

Gilles Wach

I. Introduction

Christian worship is, as Cardinal Journet has shown, "the axis of the present Church"² . It continues, in the words of the constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, "the exercise of the priestly mission of Jesus Christ, an exercise in which the sanctification of man is signified by sensible signs..., in which the integral public worship is exercised by the mystical body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the head and by its members"³ .

The Church thus appears as the continuation in time of the mystery of the Incarnation. Continuing the exercise of Christ's priestly function essentially through the sacramental offering of the unique sacrifice of Calvary, the Church, through its liturgy, accomplishes the "gestures of Christ by which God is glorified and man is saved"⁴ : *cultus divinus et sanctificatio hominis*, which are the two fundamental elements of the liturgical and sacramental economy⁵ .

Thus we can understand what the mission and work of the Church is in the liturgical act, and how important the liturgical act is in the life of the Church, for "as an act of the Church, the liturgy is modelled on the very constitution of the Church..."⁶ The Church, in which divine virtue is at work, endowed with supernatural instrumentality, is "entirely a sacred sign"⁷ ; the Church, I say, manifests itself best and is most fully expressed, in the totality of its mystery and the harmonious order of its sacred hierarchy, during the liturgical assembly.

"Hieratic or sacerdotal," wrote Father Clérissac, "is how, above all, we must describe the office that the Church fulfils between God and men. At the moment when, according to St Paul's great painting, the Lord Jesus makes his glorious entry into Heaven to complete – as in his

¹ Proceedings I. Notre-Dame-du-Laus – Gap. 4 to 6 October 1995.

² Charles JOURNET, *L'Église du Verbe Incarné*, Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1952, Vol. I, p. 63 ff.

³ VATICAN II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 11.

⁴ Cf. J. de SAINTE-MARIE, O.C.D., *L'Eucharistie salut du monde*, Montmiral: Les Éditions du Cèdre, 1982, p. 304 ff.

⁵ Cf. St THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae*, IIIa, Q. 60, A. 5.

⁶ Cf. Irénée-Henri DALMAIS, O.P., *Initiation à la liturgie*, Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1963, pp. 63-74.

⁷ See A.-G. MARTIMORT, *L'Église en prière*, Tournai: Desclée de Brouwer, 1959, pp. 7–8.

definitive temple – his priestly function... then also the Church appears to the world in the splendour of the insignia of the priesthood to continue, inseparably with Him, on earth, this same function"⁸ .

It is with this awareness of the identity between the liturgy of Heaven and the liturgy of earth⁹ , the one liturgy presided over by Christ in the splendour of heaven and vision, and here below in the splendour of the militant Church moved by faith and enlivened by the Holy Spirit, that we must approach the theme we have set ourselves, namely ecclesiology through the liturgical books. We will therefore attempt to give an account of the "realisation" of the hierarchical Church in the work of divine worship, which "realisation" is essentially accomplished, and we will see why, during the offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice by the "hierarchy". The latter, invested with all pontifical *potestas*, is appointed to perform the highest ritual consecrations and thus to be, where his authority is exercised by virtue of his jurisdiction, where his *cathedra* is legitimately established, the keystone of the assembly and of Christian society.

Admittedly, given the breadth of the statement and the many ways in which it can be approached, we must restrict our presentation to the following conditions: our task, in reading and analysing the *Pontificale Romanum* and the *Cæremoniale Episcoporum* – the former published in 1595, the latter in 1600 under the orders of Clement VIII – is to highlight certain liturgical aspects that manifest the ecclesiological, and therefore sacramental, doctrine of the liturgical books of the post-Tridentine period.

For each of the two books, we will proceed as follows: after providing historical background information to help us better understand their identity, we will briefly outline the structure of either a section of the book in question or, in the case of *the Cæremoniale Episcoporum*, the entire book. then we will proceed to analyses and remarks which, although far from exhaustive, will enable us to understand the ecclesiological physiognomy of the so-called Tridentine liturgy, in order to finally draw some conclusions and form some wishes not unrelated to the situation of the liturgy in the Church of 1995.

⁸ Humbert CLÉRISSAC, O.P., *Le Mystère de l'Église*, Paris: Cerf, 1985, pp. 65-79.

⁹ See Mother Cécile BRUYÈRE, *La Vie spirituelle et l'oraison*, Solesmes: éd. Solesmes, 1984, pp. 373-397; Marie-Vincent BERNARDOT, O.P., *De l'Eucharistie à la Trinité*, Paris: Cerf, 1991, pp. 133-138; Klaus GAMBER and Christa SCHAFFER, "La Liturgia come teofania e figura del cielo," *Notizie* 123 (1987), pp. 1-6.

Before going any further, allow us to make one last historical remark. The publication of the two books we are about to consider is part of the history of the implementation of the reform of the liturgical books. This reform, undertaken in Trent, was completed in the decades following the Council, which had left the task and work to the Holy See. The period of publication of the liturgical books – from the publication of the Roman Breviary in 1568 by the bull *Quod a nobis* of St. Pius V to the bull *Apostolicæ Sedi* by which Paul V published the Roman Ritual – is therefore the period par excellence of the Tridentine liturgy. Thus, the books published corresponded to the wishes expressed during the third period of the Council of Trent, which wishes – concerning essentially the breviary and the missal – never questioned that the Roman books should be the basis of the reform¹⁰. Over the following centuries, additions were made to the breviary and the missal, which affected the calendar in particular. As for the two books we wish to consider here, until recently they had not undergone any additions or modifications, except in a very accidental manner.

II. The Pontificale Romanum of Clement VIII

II.1 Genealogy of the work

When Clement VIII published the Roman Pontifical in 1595, it was not a question of presenting the bishops with a new or original work. In fact, the published book was the same one that Innocent VIII had published more than a century earlier, in 1485, following the work of his master of ceremonies Agostino Patrizi Piccolomini, Bishop of Pienza and Montalcino, assisted by Jean Burckard, under the title: *Pontificalis Ordinis Liber incipit...* The recent work of Father Dykmans¹¹, has established that, compared to the book of the previous century, Clement VIII's pontifical was innovative in only one chapter¹²; canonical and disciplinary annotations resulting from the decisions of the Council of Trent, especially relating to the reception of holy orders; additions received from editions subsequent to that of 1485, such as the Venetian edition of 1520¹³, the work of Albert de Castello or Castellani; finally, extensive deletions affecting the third book,

¹⁰ Cf. H. JEDIN, *Storia del Concilio di Trento*, Brescia: Morcelliana, 1984, T. IV, pp. 344-347; H. JEDIN, *Chiesa della fede, Chiesa della storia*, Brescia: Morcelliana, 1972, pp. 391-416.

¹¹ See M. DYKMANS, S.J., *Le Pontifical romain révisé au XVII^e siècle*, Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1985, pp. 149-157.

¹² *Pontificale Romanum*, Book I, *De publicatione festorum mobilium in Epipania Domini*, rite – according to Catalani – attested in Calabria in the 13th century.

¹³ "*Pontificale secundum ritum sacrosanctæ Romanæ ecclesiæ cum multis additionibus...*"

whose essentially rubricist and ceremonial content would be reserved for *the Cæremoniale Episcoporum*, then to be published and still in preparation.

Clement VIII's *Pontificale Romanum* is therefore essentially the *Pontificale Ordinis liber* of 1485, restored, purged of recent and fanciful additions, and of printing errors. The restoration of the pontifical was therefore easier to accomplish than that of the breviary and the missal, since it had already been carried out under Innocent VIII, in a manner that we must consider.

The approach that guided the drafting of *the Pontificalis Ordinis Liber* is clearly outlined in the letter-preface from the Bishop of Pienza to Innocent VIII, which appears at the beginning of the first editions of the work¹⁴. Here, a working method was formulated and applied that was to be followed by liturgists of the Tridentine and post-Tridentine periods. Because, at the end of the 15th century, the popes were faced with a situation of liturgical anarchy, it was Innocent VIII's desire to remedy this by revising the pontifical, not for the use of the pope himself, but for that of the dioceses. Thus, based on a reworking of the pontifical *secundum consuetudinem Romanæ ecclesiæ*, liturgical unification would be achieved¹⁵. Patrizi's long ceremonial experience and erudition were to remedy the difficulties through a "laborious and multifaceted" work in which Burckard was also involved. *The main Auctoritas* from which they worked was the pontifical of Guillaume Durand, Bishop of Mende; this book, composed around 1294, soon spread beyond the borders of Gévaudan and, thanks to its intrinsic qualities, became established throughout Christendom and even in Rome itself. It was this pontifical, undoubtedly altered and transformed, that was used by most bishops of the 15th century: canonical and liturgical science, as well as its conformity in principle with Roman customs, had made it prevail. In a way, if we read Patrizi's letter correctly, his aim was to restore Durand de Mende's pontifical, purifying it of the ravages of time and certain superfluities, completing it and correcting it here and there. To this end, several manuscripts were consulted and compared. However, what was practised in Rome was to be used in all dioceses. What was missing from Durand was taken from the ceremonials of the Pope and the bishops, with a concern for clarity and logic.

¹⁴ Cf. M. DYKMANS, *Le Pontifical romain révisé...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-110.

¹⁵ "*Neque erit absurdum si reliquiæ ecclesiæ quæ a Romana fidem et christiana dogmata susceperunt, illamque ut omnium matrem et magistram venerantur et colunt, cum ea in sacris ritibus omnino convenerint, ne in aliquo a matre discrepare videantur.*"

We owe to Father Dykmans the study of the composition of Patrizi's *Pontificale Ordinis Liber*: what it owes to Durand de Mende, namely the essentials; the details of what he corrects, completes, eliminates, adds, etc. Thus, in addition to the identity between Clement VIII's Roman Pontifical and Innocent VIII's book, we can draw the following conclusions:

—Durand de Mende is at the origin of *the* post-Tridentine *Pontificale Romanum*. Patrizi Piccolomini's contribution as a rubricist is certainly notable, but it is of greater interest to the *Cæremoniale Episcoporum*, as we shall see.

—Although Clement VIII, and Innocent VIII before him, reproduced Durand's work, they retained what Durand himself had retained: prayers and rites. Admittedly, Durand—and Mgr. Andrieu has sufficiently proven this—¹⁶ produced a systematic and synthetic work worthy of the era, the 13th century, of which he was the liturgical representative, but, as Dykmans concluded, "we must finally mention the old texts that the Bishop of Mende was able to compile. With a few exceptions, the prayers are not by Durand, nor even borrowed by him from recent pontificals of the 12th or 13th centuries, but sometimes come from the 11th century, and almost always from before the year 1000. They were known in Rome at least in the 7th century, in Gaul, Spain, England, etc., in the 8th and 9th centuries, and almost always in Mainz in the Romano-Germanic pontifical since 950¹⁷. As for Durand's ceremonial sources, they are the Romano-Germanic pontifical, the Roman pontifical of the 12th century and, above all, the pontifical of the curia of the early 13th century¹⁸ .

It is therefore by considering the work of William Durand that we can best understand the identity and doctrine of *the Pontificale Romanum*. This doctrine is ecclesiological because it is sacramental, and sacramental because it is ecclesiological¹⁹ .

¹⁶ M. ANDRIEU, *Le Pontifical romain au Moyen Âge*, Vol. III, "Le Pontifical de Guillaume Durand," Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Studi e Testi* 88, 1940, pp. V-XV, 3-22, 311-320.

¹⁷ Cf. M. DYKMANS, *Le Pontifical romain révisé...*, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

¹⁸ Cf. M. ANDRIEU, *Le Pontifical romain...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 311-315.

¹⁹ Mgr. Andrieu's remarks on Guillaume Durand's working method, which further clarify what we noted in Patrizi's letter to Innocent VIII, can help us to better understand the spirit and atmosphere of the pontifical. "The Bishop of Mende," wrote Mgr. Andrieu, "[...] in his numerous borrowings from the Roman Pontifical, did not confine himself to copying. The *Ordines* taken from this authoritative model were subjected to lucid and firm criticism, both in terms of content and form. He hardly touched the euchological formulas, except to remove some and introduce others. But in the rubrics, his revision work was as extensive as it was meticulous. He accomplished it as a canonist, anxious to foresee everything, to specify everything, to leave nothing to personal arbitrariness, and to always coordinate practice with the rules of law. On numerous occasions, he did not hesitate to modify the details of the rites in order to better bring out their meaning and significance. He even added new ones, thanks to which the invisible effects of liturgical action would be clearly signified. Whatever his respect for Roman tradition, he believed that it could still be enriched. Compare the ritual of ordinations in the pontifical of the Curia and that of Durand. The general order has not changed, but in the new version, the successive acts, meticulously regulated, have gained in prominence. Some are included here for the first time in the Roman framework. The presentation of the insignia of each order solemnly marks the change in status of the ordinands. Spiritual powers are gradually conferred through distinct rites, and the expressive formulas pronounced by the consecrating prelate reveal the nature of each of them. These new additions are closely integrated into the text of the Roman model. M. ANDRIEU, *Le Pontifical romain...*, *op. cit.*, p. 315.

II.2 Outline of the first book

In the prologue to Guillaume Durand's pontifical, we read the outline of the work: *Sane liber iste tres continet partes. In prima de personarum benedictionibus, ordinationibus et consecrationibus agitur.* This is followed by a list of subjects. *In secunda parte de consecrationibus et benedictionibus aliarum tam sacrarum quam profanarum rerum agitur, videlicet: etc. In tertia parte de quibusdam officis agitur, videlicet: etc.*

This is the very plan of Clement VIII's pontifical. We will consider here only the first book, and we will do so directly in the post-Tridentine pontifical. To do this, we will use an edition containing the insignificant modifications of Benedict XIV, as Father Dykmans says, but prior to the abridged edition of 1962.

Our first chapter is that of confirmation. Certainly, the bishop baptises, but since this function is not essentially pontifical, we will immediately consider the rite of confirmation.

Then begins the long section of *De Ordinibus conferendis*. After the canonical remarks concerning the time of ordinations, the examination and the dignity of the candidates, we are transported to the heart of a pontifical Mass during which, successively, all minor and major orders will be conferred. Although tonsure does not constitute an order, it nevertheless inaugurates the *course of study*. The chapter on priestly ordination considers the continuation and completion of the pontifical Mass.

Then there is another long section that directly concerns pontifical dignity: *De Consecratione Electi in Episcoporum*. Of particular note is a chapter on *De Pallio*.

Then come the chapters on abbatial dignity and the consecration of virgins.

The book concludes with the sanctification of secular power: kings and queens blessed and crowned, knights blessed and knighted.

II.3 Liturgical and ecclesiological notes

All these consecrations are therefore performed by the bishop. We must therefore immediately note the importance of the bishop in the life of the Church and Christian society. This bishop is the bishop of a diocese, of a territory, master of ritual consecrations, of teaching and of government over a particular church which he dominates from his *cathedra*. Our pontifical – certainly based on the sacramentaries for the euchological formulas and the *Ordines Romani* for many of its ceremonial achievements – is nevertheless a work with an obvious medieval touch and mark. Its development is linked to the establishment of the spiritual, social and political realities of Christianity; it is the most structured reflection of the *Respublica christiana*. In a way, it is the treatise on the sanctification of this order, *the new Imperium, Corpus christianorum*.

This evolution towards the constitution of this book began as early as the 8th century with the detachment of the old books in order to constitute a type of liturgical book combining the euchological formulas of the sacramentaries with the prescriptions of *the Ordines*. The history of this development, of which *the ordo* L50 and the pontifical of Mainz are the first known examples, culminated in the pontifical of Durand de Mende, the work of a bishop whose *Rationale divinarum officium* had already proven his capacity for liturgical synthesis.

"With Guillaume Durand's work," wrote Mgr. Andrieu, "the pontifical reached its perfect development. No other book reveals so clearly to us how religious ideas underpin the entire structure of medieval society. This society, the scholar continued, sought only to be a Christian community hierarchically organised for the salvation of all: its recognised purpose was to provide its members with the means to attain – beyond earthly and limited goals – their eternal destiny. The pontifical reveals the plan and foundations of this ideal construction. The principal architect is the bishop, in whom rests the fullness of the priesthood²⁰ .

At a time when great cathedrals were being built and the whole life of Christian society was organised around the altar of the Eucharistic sacrifice, Durand's pontifical shows this society constituted by the sacraments, blessings and sacramentals; it reveals the Church itself as a sign of sanctification, as a great sacrament of salvation of which the bishop is the depositary and dispenser, shepherd of the flock because he sanctifies the flock. The bishop as he is presented here—acting on every page of Durand's Pontifical and on every page of *the Pontificale Romanum*—is the hierarch,

²⁰ M. ANDRIEU, *Le Pontifical romain...*, *op. cit.*, p. 9 ff.

the liturgist, the pontiff who leads his people to the mystery, to the glorification of the Lord through whom we are then sanctified. Now, it is because the acts of the Church's liturgy are those of Christ the High Priest that sanctification is effectively accomplished; it is because our prayer is that of Christ in us that it becomes pleasing to God. Thus the pontiff leads us to the mystery, and does not lower the mystery to the level of human indigence. The whole of Christian life is then ordered towards worship and sanctification.

Indeed, through sacramental characters, Christians are appointed to worship. At baptism, along with supernatural life, a sacred and cultic mark was conferred on our spiritual powers, an appointment and designation directly related to spiritual worship and the external acts required of that worship. Therefore, in truth, every member of the people of God participates through baptism in the priesthood of Christ, insofar as he or she is capable and appointed to render true worship. Now, our pontifical – if it opens with the chapter on confirmation, to which every member of the people of God is likewise called– it is because this sacrament imprints a character, a mark of the Christian's elevation to the perfection of spiritual age which, according to St Thomas Aquinas, is a *gradus*, implies the excellence of a state, and therefore confers a *potestas spiritualis*: "*datur homini potestas spiritualis ad quasdam alias actiones sacras*"²¹ . The bishop, being the head of the religious community—like its keystone, in whom resides the fullness of the priesthood—conferring on the confirmand a character, a sign of spiritual power; in holy ordinations, he transmits the power to perform formally sanctifying actions and, essentially, the power to *conficere corpus et sanguinem Domini*, a power to which all stages of ordination are oriented and related; he elevates priests to *the onus episcopatus*, which is both an office and a sacrament, a hierarchical degree and a state of spiritual perfection; it distinguishes, by means of a cultic designation or blessing, spiritual authorities – abbots and abbesses; through the consecration of virgins, it solemnises a state of life

²¹ Saint THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae*, IIIa, Q. 77, A. 5.

that is a state of perfection; finally, it sanctifies the office of governing and defending the temporal order of Christendom through the coronation of kings and the knighting of knights²² .

Our pontifical presents to our eyes the harmonious perfection of the Church and Christian society, a harmonious perfection in which St. Thomas Aquinas distinguishes states of life, hierarchical degrees and offices. "Because the Church," wrote Father Mennessier²³ , "is a visible society, this diversity of functions and spiritual situations must be made clearly visible. Anyone who is appointed to a sacred office, committed to a state of perfection, elevated to a hierarchical degree, will receive the mark of this. This will be a sacred mark, a consecration, for the Church is organised solely with a view to the holiness of its members. And these external signs, "gestures", will correspond to spiritual realities: *In actibus ecclesiae spiritualia corporalibus respondent*.

Here we find an explanation of the "staging"²⁴ of the pontifical: the words and gestures of the bishop and those who receive a sacrament, a blessing or consecration. These words and gestures express and signify sacred realities, then, by divine virtue, in the exercise of sanctification. These "staged performances" are based on a doctrine: the doctrine of the sacraments and the hierarchical function of the bishop. These "staged performances" are very majestic and, in many of their details, have a meaning that it is up to true liturgists to bring to light. "The prayer of the Church," wrote Mgr. Battifol, "speaks a language that, in its sobriety and pathos, has no equal anywhere else."

²² The 1962 Pontifical, the first abridged edition of Clement VIII's Pontifical published by John XXIII, omitted the chapters relating to the sanctification of the temporal order. Nabuco, in his *Pontificalis Romani expositio juridico-practica* of 1962, stated that these chapters had disappeared because the Pontifical was not a historical book, and it was therefore unnecessary to include obsolete rites. However, it should be noted that the last coronation *ad mentem Pontificalis Romani* was that of Emperor Charles II as Apostolic King of Hungary in 1916, a relatively recent event. Similarly, let us not forget that the sovereigns of Great Britain, although schismatic, are still crowned until further notice, and the rite of their coronation has retained several customs from the Roman Pontifical. Perhaps, too, Monsignor Nabuco and the revisers of 1962 despaired of ever seeing any temporal power willing to receive sacred investiture... Be that as it may, the study of the discarded chapters is nonetheless of great interest: the ceremonies described provide us with a solid exposition of Catholic doctrine on the relationship between Church and State, and on the obligations of sovereigns towards the Church. Cardinal Schuster (in *Liber sacramentorum*, T. II, chap. XIV) distinguishes between two types of royal consecrations. The first – *Ordo coronationis imperatorum* – is no longer found in the pontifical since Patrizi reserved it for the papal ceremonial published in 1488; reserved for the Pope, deeply imbued with the concept of *the Imperium Romanum*, it was used in Bologna in 1529, when Charles V's dream, "the extraordinary worldview of the last medieval emperor" (JEDIN, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 258), seemed to be coming true. As for the second type of royal consecration, it is found in our pontifical, since it is reserved for the metropolitan. Less imbued with imperial doctrine, we nevertheless find in it the whole doctrine of the relationship.

On the subject of royal ceremonies, see the works of Schramm and Elze, catalogued by VOGEL (in *Introduction aux sources de l'histoire du culte chrétien au Moyen Âge*, Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 1981, pp. 110, 164-168).

²³ André-Ignace MENNESSIER, O.P., "La religion" [Religion], in Paris: *Revue des jeunes*, 1934, Vol. II, "Notes doctrinales thomistes" [Thomistic Doctrinal Notes], p. 435. See also A.-I. MENNESSIER, "Les réalités sacrées dans le culte chrétien d'après saint Thomas" [Sacred realities in Christian worship according to Saint Thomas], in *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques XX* (1931), pp. 276-286, 453-471.

²⁴ Pierre BATTIFOL, preface in René DUBOSQ, P.S.S., *Étapes du sacerdoce*, Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1947, pp. V-X.

Now, what we must note—without which we would not grasp the real identity of our book—is that the bishop, the hierarch, the high priest who organises the Christian assembly in his cathedral, leads the people of God and the dignitaries of the people to the foot of the altar where the Eucharistic sacrifice is accomplished. For all the gestures and rites have a virtue that comes from the Paschal sacrifice and connects us to the central act of Christian worship. "*Sacramentum vero baptismi ordinatur ad Eucharistiæ receptionem; in quo etiam perficitur aliquis per confirmationem,*" St. Thomas tells us²⁵.

All degrees of the hierarchy are ordered to the mystery of the altar. To be convinced of this, one need only read the texts of the holy ordinations. The bishop ordains priests and confers cultic designations; the metropolitan receives the *pallium* from Peter, a sign of his dependence and of that communion without which no Eucharist is legitimate; the monk signs the charter of his profession on the altar; the blessing of the abbot and abbess, a sign of the perfection of their religious life, is accomplished in union with the sacrifice of Christ; the virgins receive their veils from the altar of sacrifice where they have been blessed by the pontiff; it is from the altar of sacrifice that emperors and kings will receive their crowns, sceptres and swords; finally, before the altar will come the knights who defend the faith *ad confusionem inimicorum Crucis Christi*.

Thus, the bishop must be understood primarily in his role as a hierarch. According to Pseudo-Dionysius, he is above all the one who connects with sacred forces in the symbolic acts of worship and the administration of the sacraments. In his work *Méditation sur l'Église*²⁶, published in 1954, Cardinal de Lubac admirably highlighted this most ancient conception of the episcopal function, which was that of St. Thomas²⁷: the bishop is essentially responsible for the fulfilment of a cultic function; the ministry of order is at the root of the ministries of teaching and government. "To understand the hierarchy," wrote Cardinal de Lubac, "that is, to understand the Church, one must therefore contemplate it in the act of celebrating the Eucharist"²⁸. And the author refers to the solemn Eucharistic celebration around the bishop, where the fullness of the mystery of the Church is manifested: that is to say, the hierarchical and ministerial priesthood without which the offering

²⁵ Saint THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae*, IIIa, Q. 65, A. 5.

²⁶ Henri DE LUBAC, S.J., *Méditation sur l'Église*, Paris: Aubier, 1954, pp. 111–118.

²⁷ MENNESSIER, "Les réalités sacrées...", *op. cit.*, pp. 468-469.

²⁸ H. DE LUBAC, *Meditation on the Church*, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

of the whole holy nation would be nothing more than a vow of the priestly people who, because of their baptismal character, are "the people of the altar," as Dom Vonier wrote, "a people whose destiny is irrevocably linked to the altar"²⁹ where "a divine act is performed independently of the people, a proclamation of God's sovereignty, to which the multitudes of the faithful must cry out their adherence"³⁰.

Therefore, after these few considerations, it seems necessary to address the *Cæremoniale Episcoporum*, which reveals the ceremonial structure of the liturgical assembly led by the hierarch and shepherd of the flock.

III. The *Cæremoniale Episcoporum* of Clement VIII

III.1 Genealogy of the work

In July 1600, five years after the publication of the pontifical, Clement VIII published the *Cæremoniale Episcoporum*. Its drafting, which began in 1582 under the orders of Gregory XIII, was initially carried out by the holy cardinal archbishop of Milan, Charles Borromeo, cardinals Paleotti and Caraffa, several ceremonialists and dignitaries of the curia. It fell to the Sacred Congregation of Rites, founded in 1587 by Sixtus V, to continue the work. The congregation included Saint Cardinal Bellarmine, Cardinals Baronius, Antoniano, etc., "men illustrious for their holiness and learning"³¹.

When the pontifical was published in 1595, work had been underway for more than ten years on *the Cæremoniale Episcoporum*, reserving for it – as we have already mentioned – the rubric chapters of Patrizi's ^{third}book. But would it be enough to reproduce the old chapters on pontifical vespers and mass in a new book?

It should be noted that Patrizi's long chapters had themselves deviated from Durand. The latter, in fact, had neglected the bishop celebrating the sacraments reserved for ordinary priests and had devoted only too brief chapters to the pontifical liturgy of Vespers and Mass. Successive pontificals, and Patrizi's in particular, had therefore had to supplement Durand. Patrizi's sources

²⁹ Anscar VONIER, O.S.B., *Le Peuple de Dieu*, Lyon: éd. de l'Abeille, 1943, p. 162 et seq.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Cf. *Cæremoniale Episcoporum ex decreto sacrasancti oecumenici concili Vaticani II instauratum...*, Rome, MCMLXXXV, p. 9.

were, first and foremost, the papal ceremonial of the 13th century; *the Ordo* of Blessed Gregory X, from around 1273-1274 – that is, *the Ordo XIII* of Mabillon's *Museum Italicum*; the episcopal Mass from Cardinal Latino Malabranca's episcopal ceremonial³² (c. 1280); Cardinal Stefaneschi's papal ceremonial³³, composed around 1310 in Avignon; the Avignon texts – Jean de Sion, François de Conzié, etc. –³⁴; the ceremonial of the Patriarch of Alexandria, Pierre Ameil³⁵, composed after his return to Rome and completed under Martin V. These books had taken over from *the Ordines Romani* of the early Middle Ages; they were derived from them via the medieval pontificals; Mabillon had classified some of them among the *Ordines*.

In 1485, the liturgy that Patrizi wanted to present in the rubrical chapters of the third book of his pontifical was an episcopal liturgy. While drawing on his perfect knowledge of the customs of the papal chapel, he adapted them and reduced them to the proportions of a cathedral; to do so, he made extensive use of Latino Malabranca. A few years later, in 1488 – again at the request of Innocent VIII – he published a papal ceremonial³⁶; the Venice edition – dated 1516 and produced by Cristoforo Marcello under the title *Rituum ecclesiasticarum sive sacrarum caeremoniarum sanctæ Romanæ Ecclesiæ libri tres* – remained in force, as noted in *the proemium* of the 1984 *Cæremoniale Episcoporum*³⁷: *nostris quoque diebus, in caerimoniis Romani Pontificis*, that is, until the post-Vatican II era.

In the post-Tridentine era, the editors compiling the future *Cæremoniale Episcoporum* faced a daunting task: although the work had to be in line with the *Ordines* and previous ceremonials, they had to produce a kind of comprehensive manual for use by bishops, but also by chapters and monasteries; they had to produce a Roman manual – with authentically Roman ceremonial content – and to do so they had to detach the ceremonial appendices from the pontifical of 1485, adapt the principles of the papal ceremonial of 1488 to bishops, consult numerous codices from the Apostolic Library and countless other works.

³² Cf. M. DYKMANS, *Le Cérémonial papal de la fin du Moyen Âge à la Renaissance*, Brussels-Rome: Library of the Belgian Historical Institute in Rome, 1977, Vol. I.

³³ Cf. M. DYKMANS, *Le Cérémonial papal...*, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, 1981.

³⁴ See M. DYKMANS, *Le Cérémonial papal...*, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, 1983.

³⁵ See M. DYKMANS, *Le Cérémonial papal...*, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, 1985.

³⁶ The text was published by M. DYKMANS, *L'Œuvre de Patrizi Piccolomini*, Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1982, pp. 293–294.

³⁷ *Commentary on the Cæremoniale Episcoporum*, *op. cit.*, 8.

Thus Patrizi's papal ceremonial formed the basis of *the Cæremoniale Episcoporum*. The importance of *De Cæremoniis cardinalium et episcoporum in eorum diocesibus* by Paris de Grassi³⁸ – canon of Bologna and former master of ceremonies to Julius II – has also been highlighted, with various passages from it found in the *Cæremoniale Episcoporum*³⁹. Here again, Paris de Grassi's intention had been to adapt the papal liturgy to the episcopal liturgy.

When it was published, Clement VIII's *Cæremoniale Episcoporum* was not the successor to any previous work. It was a new book, or a kind of very complete and systematic *Ordo Romanus* – new in form rather than content.

Various editions, with minor corrections, were published: in 1650, under Innocent X; in 1727, under Benedict XIII; in 1742, Benedict XIV added a third book, an appendix of ceremonial laws concerning governors and vice-legates of the Papal States; In 1886, Leo XIII had a new typical edition produced⁴⁰. No corrections were made to it until after the Second Vatican Council. Monsignor Gromier believed that one had to be very familiar with its principles and "doctrine" to

³⁸ Written around the beginning of the 16th century, but only published in Rome in 1564.

³⁹ C. VOGEL (in *Introduction aux sources*, *op. cit.*, p. 212) attributes the *Cæremoniale Episcoporum* to Grassi's Paris book. Mgr. Gromier (in *Commentaire du Cæremoniale Episcoporum*, Paris: La Colombe, 1959, p. 8 ff.) emphasises instead the adaptive nature of Patrizi's papal ceremonial, whose *Cæremoniale Episcoporum* "clearly sets out the doctrine [...] with judicious adjustments with regard to bishops". Dykmans' remarks are interesting (in *Le Pontifical romain révisé au XV^e siècle...*, *op. cit.*, p. 122) are interesting: the Mass described in Patrizi's pontifical, he says, is "halfway between Latino Malabranca around 1280 and the *Cæremoniale Episcoporum* of 1600. The latter is closer to the pontifical in its 15th and 16th century editions than to Grassi's Paris book. [...] It is Patrizi's text that should be printed alongside the other. The revisers of Gregory XIII and Clement VIII had it before their eyes and followed it, reworking it very freely. However, many formulas from the pontifical can be found in the ceremonial."

⁴⁰ The *Cæremoniale Episcoporum* has been little commented upon, but there has been no shortage of manuals explaining its rubrical practice, since the *Cæremoniale Episcoporum* was the mandatory ceremonial book for the solemn liturgy of the Roman rite. Let us not forget that this is not simply a "ceremonial" but a "liturgical book". Among the commentators, Catalani stands out, who published a work in Rome in 1744 with abundant historical notes, an irreplaceable work of scholarship. In 1956, Monsignor Nabuco, consultant to the Sacred Congregation of Rites, published a *Jus Pontificalium*, an introduction to *the Cæremoniale Episcoporum* intended to expound, explain and resolve a number of questions of liturgical law raised by the reading of our liturgical book. Monsignor Nabuco announced the forthcoming publication of a commentary by another consultant of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, Monsignor Léon Gromier. Monsignor Gromier's "commentary" – published in Paris in 1957 – consists of a careful reading accompanied by remarks, explanations and corrections that reveal the author's perfect knowledge of Patrizi's ceremonial, Grassi's book, Roman customs and all the liturgical books. Particularly noteworthy is the author's commitment to understanding and intelligibility of the ceremonies, emphasising cause and effect relationships, and introducing a Roman liturgical mentality, a "doctrine of ceremonial" that the author claimed was not understood by "the exponents of a new school, the leaders of a liturgical movement". (*Commentary on the Cæremoniale Episcoporum*, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-13).

Among the rubricists, we note Bauldry's *Manuale Sacrarum Cæremoniarum*, published in Paris in 1640. The most classic and complete of all the manuals published since the 17th century was that of Mgr. Pio Martinucci, master of ceremonies to Pius IX; it is the reference work par excellence for the practice of Roman ceremonies. There is no shortage, of course, of manuals in the vernacular – of varying degrees of validity – but in the field of pontifical functions, confusion is unfortunately not uncommon: this is why it is necessary to refer directly to Roman books and the works of Nabuco and Gromier.

dare to claim to make corrections to it. He strongly denied that there were many people capable of doing so. It should be noted that the new *Cæremoniale Episcoporum* of 1984 sometimes quotes it, gives a brief history of it, and intends – while repealing it – to place itself in its continuity.

III.2 Plan of the *Cæremoniale Episcoporum*

We will now turn our attention to Clement VIII's *Cæremoniale Episcoporum*, in the typical edition of 1886, without dwelling on the third book⁴¹ (appendix by Benedict XIV).

Clement VIII's *Cæremoniale Episcoporum* is divided into two books. The last chapter of the second book is merely an appendix devoted to the modulations of liturgical chant. It is therefore the penultimate chapter that constitutes the true end of the work. The first chapter of the first book considers the bishop-elect, while the last – or penultimate – chapter of the second book considers the deceased bishop.

In the first chapter, "as soon as it has been ascertained that the Supreme Pontiff has promoted him to a cathedral church," the conduct to be observed and the vestments of the bishop-elect are described. In the last chapter—the bishop buried with the appropriate ceremonies—prayers are offered for the election of his successor. The subject of *the Cæremoniale Episcoporum* is therefore episcopal life, liturgical life, hieratic life, from beginning to end.

The first book, in addition to the beginnings of pontifical life (chapters I to III), sets out the general principles: how the bishop should behave *circa benedictiones et alia episcopalia munia* and when ecclesiastical dignitaries superior to him arise in his diocese (chapter IV); what are the functions and qualities of the masters of ceremonies, the sacristan, each of the sacred and lower ministers of the Mass and pontifical vespers (chapters V to XI). The furnishings and decoration of the church are the subject of precise prescriptions (chapters XII to XIV). Chapter XV examines how, in what attire, and by whom the bishop is to be received at the cathedral; chapter XVI considers the use of the pallium, and chapter ^{XVII} that of the mitre and crozier. Nine chapters then set out and describe how to perform certain ceremonies, such as incense offerings, the kiss of peace,

⁴¹ Admittedly, this appendix was "motivated by times gone by," wrote Bishop Gromier. However, "not only does this book lay down certain ceremonial rules, but it also promotes respect for hierarchy, good organisational conduct and protocol; it opposes informality and the so-called democratic 'good-natured' approach." (*Commentary on the Cæremoniale Episcoporum, op. cit.*, pp. 12-13).

etc. –chapters XVIII to XXVI–. Chapters XVII and XVIII give rules for the singing of prayers, the organ, cantors and musicians. Two chapters – XXIX^eand XXX^e– describe the bishop's low Mass and the Mass celebrated in his presence in his jurisdiction. Chapter XXXI closes the first book with the synodal rites.

The second book is the book of the bishop's solemn functions: it describes his liturgical life. First, seven chapters consider the celebration of the divine office: two types of pontifical vespers depending on whether or not the pontifical Mass is celebrated; chapter III presents solemn vespers without the presence of the bishop and therefore establishes rules for any solemn non-pontifical liturgy.

Chapter VIII, the longest in the entire ceremony, describes the entire pontifical Mass. Chapter IX is no less interesting. It describes the solemn Mass celebrated by a priest – a canon of the cathedral – in the presence of the bishop; it regulates what must be observed if it is a bishop without jurisdiction over the diocese who is to celebrate: the diocesan bishop is on the throne, the bishop without jurisdiction on another seat – the *faldistorium* – near the altar. After the funeral services (chapters X to XII), the major functions of the liturgical year are listed, either with celebration or with pontifical assistance. These functions occupy twenty-one chapters; here and there, the absence of the bishop is mentioned: an opportunity to set out rules for non-episcopal solemn liturgy. Chapter XXXIV gives a list of solemnities during which the bishop celebrates pontifically *nisi legitime fuerit impeditus*; on the occasion of other solemnities mentioned, he may intervene with pluvial and mitre. For less important feasts, assistance in choral cope –*cappa*– is reserved. The *mozzetta* is not a vestment for the throne; the bishop will only wear it at the stall. Chapters XXX to XXXVII are devoted to the anniversaries of the election and consecration of the bishop, of the deceased predecessor, and of all deceased bishops; the last chapter, as we have said, deals with the agony, death and funeral of the bishop; it ends with a *Te Deum*, which will be sung in the cathedral upon the announcement of the election of the new bishop.

III.3 Liturgical and ecclesiological notes

From the simple and brief statement of the book's plan, it will be noted that the *Cæremoniale Episcoporum* is written not for what is possible, but for what is necessary, not on the basis of

convenience or expediency, but on the basis of principles⁴². These principles can be grasped by reading the ceremonial and when it is possible to transcribe them or see them transcribed in the practice of pontifical and solemn rites and . This provides us with a key to understanding the ceremonial: ceremonies no longer appear to us merely as customs based on propriety and sanctioned by history, but truly as acts of the hierarchical Church, acts performed by each member of the hierarchy, according to their specific function by virtue of holy orders and rank, in the celebration of divine worship, divine office and sacraments, and especially the Eucharistic sacrifice.

First and foremost, according to the *Cæremoniale Episcoporum*, it is important to consider the person of the bishop. He is the bishop of a given church. This church—whatever the extent of the territory associated with it—is defined by its seat, the episcopal see, where the *cathedra*—the bishop's throne—is located in a church that has been given the name of cathedral because it houses the only fixed throne in the diocese. There, in this cathedral where only pontifical rites were once celebrated, the bishop is the organising centre of the Christian assembly, which he presides over, teaches and sanctifies.

When the bishop enters the city and takes possession of his cathedral, he does so on his own. No one introduces him. Within the territory of his diocese⁴³, the rochet he wears uncovered (L. I, C. I) marks his jurisdiction; his costume is complete and organised. The *Cæremoniale Episcoporum* does not imagine that the bishop could cede his throne to a bishop or archbishop from outside the diocese⁴⁴. In this case, the visiting bishop must behave as a stranger and refrain from any sign expressing jurisdiction. Thus, if the visiting bishop celebrates solemnly, he will be welcomed with discretion, will not wear the choral cope (cappa), nor use the throne and crozier, will celebrate *ad faldistorium* (the bishop's seat, even a residential one, when he is at the altar), will not be assisted by canons of the cathedral chapter, etc. In such a Mass, known *as ad faldistorium* – coming directly

⁴² L. GROMIER, *Commentary on the Cæremoniale Episcoporum*, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁴³ "Someone is bishop (inspector) of a church (population, building); in a sense, this church contains the episcopal see (cathedra); conversely, this episcopal see constitutes the cathedral church." (L. GROMIER, *Commentary on the Cæremoniale Episcoporum*, *op. cit.*, p. 16). With regard to the right to a fixed throne, reference should be made to the decree of Alexander VII, dated 27 September 1659 (SRC, decree 1131 in the edition of Leo XIII, *De praelatum inferiorum - ex ordine sacerdotali, privilegiis pontificalibus, including regular abbots*).

⁴⁴ A decree of the SRC, dated 2 June 1899, somewhat mitigates the rigour of the *Cæremoniale Episcoporum*. The cession of the throne may, without the ordinary bishop feeling bound to do so, be granted to a foreign bishop, but if the ordinary bishop is a cardinal, he may only grant it to a cardinal; the bishop, even if not a cardinal, will refuse it to his coadjutor and auxiliaries, to regular abbots, etc. (Cf. J. NABUCO, *Jus Pontificalium*, *op. cit.*, pp. 321-322).

from the papal chapel – the organising centre of the assembly is not the foreign pontiff, but the altar, as is the case for the simpler Mass celebrated by a priest of the second order.

If a cardinal arrives, whether legate or not, the bishop will yield his throne to him and, if he is to officiate, he will do so *ad faldistorium*. But let us not be mistaken, the bishop does not become a subject of the cardinal; what he honours in the person of the cardinal is more a princely than a pontifical quality, the cardinal- e being a prince of the Church and an emanation of the Roman pontiff's sovereignty over the universal Church. It should be remembered that, until recently, the cardinalate did not automatically require episcopal ordination. Therefore, in the details of the rites, it was this princely quality that manifested itself before the pontifical quality. There was no question of "usurping" attributes that were strictly pontifical and reserved for the residential bishop: such as the assistance of canons dressed for pontifical Mass, which a cardinal would celebrate – at the throne, as we have said; such as the singing of Terce and the dressing in *the secretarium*; such as the use of the seventh candle, the formal, etc.; such as the presence of deacons of honour either for the celebration or for assistance, etc.⁴⁵ .

Particularly noteworthy, even upon a simple reading, is the importance of the chapter of canons. "A chapter exists for the exercise of worship. Canons exist for the chapter [...] canons are not appointed to form a chapter; rather, a chapter is established and filled with canons"⁴⁶ . The canons therefore form a college, they are united, they support each other, they form a choir: "The exercise of worship is the responsibility of the college of canons, who are not capable of doing so individually"⁴⁷ . The cathedral chapter is the remnant of *the ancient Presbyterium*; like the *Presbyterium*, it assists the pontiff in acts of worship. Its participation in pontifical services is active: it performs the functions of assistant priest, deacons of honour, deacon and subdeacon of the Mass. Thus, the chapter serves the bishop directly; when he puts on his vestments, all the members of the chapter put on the vestments appropriate to each of the orders that make up the chapter, if that chapter – according to the best tradition – following the example of the Sacred College, is divided

⁴⁵ However, it is necessary to point out the mitigations defined by the Sacred Congregation of Ceremonies on 23 May 1902 (cf. J. NABUCO, *Jus Pontificalium*, *op. cit.*).

⁴⁶ L. GROMIER, *Commentary on the Cæremoniale Episcoporum*, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

⁴⁷ L. GROMIER, *Commentary on the Cæremoniale Episcoporum*, *op. cit.*, pp. 53–54. "For centuries it was established, published, and upheld that all special canonical vestments, and all privileges to that end, are given to the college of canons, not to individuals; that, consequently, canons may wear canonical vestments only in their church, or outside when the chapter goes out."

by orders. The canons, thus adorned, perform a ceremonial concelebration, a vestige of the most ancient customs. Here we have an example of an adaptation of the customs of the Papal Chapel to the proportions of a cathedral.

Thus, "the chapter is to the bishop," wrote Mgr. Gromier⁴⁸, "what the Sacred College is to the pope: his *Presbyterium*. There is little difference. The Sacred College is composed of bishops, priests and deacons; subdeacons are not included. The chapter is composed of priests, deacons and subdeacons [...] there may be dignities, imitating the cardinal bishops in some way. Such an organisation, lamented our author, has never been understood in many countries, where the cathedral chapter's ' ' had a more collegial⁴⁹ than cathedral complexion, where the bishop was valued less as a diocesan pontiff than as a super-canon⁵⁰. And Bishop Gromier insisted on this "capital principle, without which pontifical offices cannot be performed intelligently".

What is important to note here, regardless of the structure of the chapter, is the importance and identity of the choir. The choir is composed of clergymen; even if they are not canons, they show solidarity with one another, they form a united body, they greet each other and greet the celebrant, they participate in the singing, they receive incense and peace, and they must know the rules of attendance and precedence. Although, unlike the canons, they do not concelebrate ceremonially, they are not silent spectators of a function that is the business of a few distant ministers; no, they unite themselves to it and manifest, in their place, the unity of the Church in prayer around the altar. The choir thus appears as the place par excellence of Christian mystical life.

The pontiff celebrates. He is surrounded by his *Presbyterium*, expressing the various degrees of the ecclesiastical hierarchy: assistant priests, deacons, subdeacons, performing the functions that belong to these orders and which the *Cæremoniale Episcoporum* sets out in detail. "*Episcopo*, we read in chapter XI of the first book, *Vesperas solemniter cantanti, præter Presbyterum et duos antiquiores Diaconos, septem Acolythi serviant. Dum Missam solemniter celebrat, alii sex ministri addantur*". And the ceremonial details and specifies the functions of these *acolythi*. Let us note the use of the term and refer immediately to the ceremonies of the ordination of the acolyte in the Roman Pontifical: the function of the acolyte is that of serving at the altar, first of all carrying the

⁴⁸ L. GROMIER, *Commentary on the Cæremoniale Episcoporum*, op. cit., p. 72.

⁴⁹ Perhaps it should be specified, in imitation of monastic choirs.

⁵⁰ or Abbas.

lights and presenting the wine and water, but also performing all the functions necessary for the liturgical action being undertaken. In the case of pontifical offices, there will therefore be many acolytes with multiple functions, but – let us note – their presence corresponds to a service to be performed; they do not clutter the sanctuary.

The masters of ceremonies of the cathedral – and therefore of pontifical offices in general – shall be members of the holy orders – chap. V – not because their function strictly requires it – an acolyte could suffice – but because it requires an understanding of the rites based on theology and canon law⁵¹. The *Cæremoniale Episcoporum* requires the bishop to provide them with the necessary books.

The sacristan of the cathedral will also be a priest. He is responsible for the Eucharistic reserve, the baptismal font, the holy oils, the relics, etc. His function requires a knowledge of the rites, since he must prepare what will be necessary to perform them. He must work in harmony with the master of ceremonies and command a number of subordinates, often clerics, preferably porters if we are to believe the texts of the ordinations.

The second book of *the Cæremoniale Episcoporum*, as we have said, presents the liturgical life of the cathedral church. The rules of the divine office are not neglected. However, all actions converge towards the *Missa solemnis*. The bishop must celebrate it on major solemnities. It is preceded – on the evening before – by the most solemn pontifical vespers, a true liturgy that undoubtedly originated in the ancient vigils. It is not our purpose to describe the rites of this Mass; such a description would require, moreover, a comparison with the Mass celebrated by the Pope. What we must note, however, is that the most solemn of liturgical actions takes place before the eyes of the people of God, in which all levels of the ecclesiastical hierarchy cooperate, that is, the Eucharistic sacrifice performed by the ministerial priesthood, which signifies and causes the unity of the whole mystical body. "It is indeed at the altar," wrote Dom Gréa, "around the altar, before the altar, at the hour of sacrifice, that the mystery of the Church appears in all its majesty, that is to say, the mystery of its hierarchy: the priesthood, in which Jesus Christ immolates and gives himself; the ministers, who go from the altar to the people; and the people, who, uniting themselves to the victim through the priesthood, become in it and through it the new humanity. Saint John saw these

⁵¹ "[...] sitque in Presbyterali ordine constitutus, bonis artibus instructus; et, si fieri posset, juris canoci, vel Theologiæ intelligentiam habeat, divinorum officiorum ac rituum Ecclesiasticorum assiduus et diligens perscrutator."

things in the splendours of Heaven..."⁵² . Now, this representation of the unity of the whole Church in the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice shows us how much the Eucharist is the sacrament par excellence of the whole Christ, of the head and the members, whose unity it signifies and causes, according to the very words of St. Thomas Aquinas: "*Res tantum hujus sacramenti est unitas corporis mystici, id est Ecclesiae, quam hoc sacramentum significat et causat*"⁵³ . (Cf. also this comment by Father de Lubac: "The Church makes the Eucharist and the Eucharist makes the Church").

Among the many other remarks we would like to add, there is one with which we would like to conclude our presentation of *the Cæremoniale Episcoporum*. It emphasises the character of the bishop as "master of the liturgy" in the territory assigned to him. Thus, when he does not celebrate the Eucharistic sacrifice himself, he may at least actively assist—wearing the cope and mitre—at the Mass celebrated by a priest, and reserve all the blessings for himself. He is also responsible for the solemn blessings of the candles on Candlemas, Ash Wednesday and Palm Sunday (), the procession of the Blessed Sacrament on Corpus Christi, the ceremonies of absolution, etc. The throne he occupies is a true liturgical place from which he can exercise his presidency outside the altar, which is not granted by the use of the faldstool, and even less so by the bench – scamnum – of the simple priest. When he leaves the throne, from where he organises the Christian assembly, he will lead it to the altar, entering the sanctuary "not made with human hands" (Heb IX, 11). May he then be like the pontiff of Dionysius, in the third book of the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*⁵⁴ :

"While the common people considered only the visible veils of mystery, the hierarch, always united with the Holy Spirit, rose to the intellectual types of ceremonies, in the sweetness of sublime contemplation and with the purity befitting the glory of pontifical dignity."

IV. Conclusion

The Roman rite, like the Holy Church, is hierarchical. The performance of the ceremonies contained in the post-Tridentine liturgical books is dictated by principles. Theology and canon law are at the root of these principles; the foundation is essentially theological, and liturgical law makes it tangible, palpable, and admirable.

⁵² Adrien GRÉA, C.R.I.C., *La Sainte Liturgie*, Paris: Maison de la Bonne Presse, 1909, pp. 40-41.

⁵³ Saint THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae*, IIIa, Q. 73, A. 3.

⁵⁴ Quoted by H. CLÉRISSAC, *Le Mystère de l'Église*, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

The ceremonies contained in the liturgical books are not the work of a particular era: the Tridentine era collected them, codified them, and synthesised them into a work of brilliant coherence and intelligibility.

It is nothing other than the celebration of the sacraments, that is, the ecclesial fulfilment of Christ's actions, and the greatest of all, the august sacrifice of the altar by way of sacramental immolation, *in signo*. In the celebration of this sacrament, the unity of the Church is manifested and brought about. Thus, the holy liturgy no longer appears merely as the performance of external acts, which are necessary insofar as they are the externalisation of the essential inner religion. But because these acts would have no efficacy if they were not performed by those who participate in the priestly function of Christ, the liturgy must be understood as the work of Christ himself, "the integral worship—according to Pius XII's definition in *Mediator Dei*—of the mystical body of Jesus Christ, that is, of the head and its members." Thus, the ceremonial aspect can appear in a new light, as essentially significant of the Church-sacrament, and must correspond, as the liturgical books of the Tridentine maturity sufficiently prove, to the divinely hierarchical reality of the Church of Christ.

Our liturgical books are still the result of the concerted effort of the Church and civilisation. The constitution of the *Respublica Christiana*, of the *Corpus Christianorum*, was not unrelated to the perfection of their elaboration. Christian society, even temporal society, corresponded to the ideal that the Church inspired, modelled and enlivened. The serious study of the liturgy—as Bishop Andrieu noted⁵⁵—requires historical knowledge and a sense of tradition.

⁵⁵ M. ANDRIEU: "During each major pontifical office, if we know how to discern the accents, we can hear the distinct voices of all the ancient Christian ages. A phrase, an expression, a single word can awaken distant echoes and transport our imagination to the precise moment in the past when that word was first uttered. As we listen to the bishop repeating the sacred formulas, we forget the time in which we live and join, across the centuries, the community of faithful who first heard the pontiff pray in this way. The rubrics themselves retain an evocative power. They describe rites whose original meaning is not always apparent: if we want to discover it and not be satisfied with a complacent symbolism, we must resurrect the circumstances in which they were created, revive the thoughts and intentions that inspired them. The objects used by the celebrant and his ministers, the sacred vessels, the liturgical vestments, all of these also have a history. Details that seem insignificant may be vestiges laden with memories.

By intelligently following the performance of a ceremony governed by pontifical law, we become aware that we are linked by a thousand spiritual ties to each of the generations that preceded us. It is in order to maintain this contact that the Church preserves its liturgical heritage above the fluctuations of literary taste and, when everything around us changes, does not expose it to the danger of ephemeral adaptations. (*The Roman Pontifical in the Middle Ages*, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. IX-X).

However, a question arises: is the study of post-Tridentine liturgical books—their genealogy, structure, content, etc.—now, in Vogel's words, nothing more than a study of *antiquitates liturgiæ*⁵⁶ ?

The commendable efforts we see on both sides tend to prove to us that a future, undoubtedly more promising than we could imagine, awaits the ancient liturgy, especially among younger generations eager for the sacred. But do we understand the doctrine of the old Tridentine books well enough? Are we not trying to give them an interpretation specific to a particular religious family, nation, spiritual school, pastoral approach, archaeologist, or semblance of civilisation, specific to an era that has little sense of tradition⁵⁷ and sins by superficiality? Yet these liturgical books need to be studied in depth and discovered as they are⁵⁸ ; their formulas remain impervious to vain commentary and the outrage of the century; they contain a liturgy to which they command us to

⁵⁶ C. VOGEL, *Introduction aux sources*, *op. cit.*, p. XI.

⁵⁷ "The exponents of a new school, the leaders of a liturgical movement, see the *C. E.* as little more than a grimoire, an antiquity, a chessboard on which the pieces can be moved at will; they have no concept of its doctrine. The *C. E.* is from a time when pastoral care was adapted to the liturgy, when pastors did not claim to dictate ceremonies [...]. If one day it were a question of revising the *C.E.*, instead of discarding it, craftsmen other than those produced so far would be needed. (emphasis added by Mgr. Gromier) *Commentary on the Cæremoniale Episcoporum*, *op. cit.*, p. 13. Here we find the discourse on liturgical reforms and the spirit that should preside over their undertaking.

⁵⁸ Cf. P. GUÉRANGER, *Institutions liturgiques*, Paris, 1851, T. III, p. 1-15, "Importance des livres de la liturgie dans l'étude de la science liturgique" (Importance of liturgical books in the study of liturgical science).

"Let those who aspire to the science of divine worship first apply themselves to the assiduous reading of these sacred documents; let them familiarise themselves with the formulas and rubrics; let them seek, until they have found it, the mysterious link that unites all the parts of this sublime whole; let them not be discouraged by the apparent dryness of this study, nor by the repugnance that absurd prejudices may have caused them to conceive: they will soon reap the fruits of their labour. This first intelligent reading will introduce them to the positive aspects of divine service and begin to open their minds to some of its mysteries, which are the joy of the heart and the light of the spirit. A second reading, renewing these impressions and reinforced by gradual research in the fields of theology, mysticism, canon law, history and ecclesiastical antiquity, will enlighten them more and more; their faith will be nourished by heavenly manna, their understanding will develop through these divine teachings of the Church, and their words will take on a degree of authority that they had not known before. Now, this light, this warmth, this life will continue to grow as long as the disciple remains faithful to following the lessons that the Church gives him in the liturgy. This study will naturally go hand in hand with that of the Holy Scriptures, which is the daily bread of the priest, and with that of tradition, which provides the key to the Scriptures and of which the books of the Roman liturgy are one of the richest treasures. If the friend of liturgical science has access to the great sources, the learned commentators, and some of the many monographs we have mentioned, his progress in doctrine will be even faster; but, we repeat, even if he had in his possession only the six books we mention, with a taste and courage for this sacred science, he would advance and, with time, become a true liturgist, not in the manner of those mechanical men who know how to write an *Ordo* and are ignorant of everything beyond that; people who stand at the door and most often refrain from entering; but, in addition to this practical science, which is a must and is child's play, he will soon understand the mysteries of divine service and will advance in this knowledge every day.

It is to the absence of this indispensable assistance that we must attribute the almost total eclipse of the science of sacred rites among us.

adapt so that, gathered together in the unity of the whole mystical body, we may enter into the fullness of the Eucharistic mystery, the salvation of our souls and of the world⁵⁹ .

⁵⁹ See VONIER, *Le Peuple de Dieu*, *op. cit.*, p. 162 ff.: "Every day brings into sharper relief the profound difference between the conceptions of men who believe in the altar and those of men who destroy the altar [...] The complete rejection of the altar is giving rise to a race that will soon have nothing in common with the ancient Christian civilisation except the soil on which that civilisation flourished."