

# The Encyclical \*Mediator Dei\* and Eucharistic Doctrine

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## 1. The Encyclical on the Eve of its Fiftieth Anniversary

In 1977, the editorial team of the journal *Communio* interviewed Cardinal Ratzinger on the topic : “Is the liturgy changeable or immutable ?” The editorial team said: “If you would be so kind as to consider this: 1947, *Mediator Dei*, the encyclical of Pius XII; and less than twenty years later, the reform. In twenty years, a silent landsl ...<sup>3</sup>” The encyclical therefore appeared to him as the classic example of a text that had been overtaken by the evolution the Church had undergone.

Such was the assessment made thirty years after the encyclical. And this assessment is highly justified today, as we approach its fiftieth anniversary.

But this encyclical is not the only text that has been called into question. On the following page, Cardinal Ratzinger also notes: ‘Here too, the Council has quite simply been overtaken’, to the point where he wonders ‘whether, after all, there is still a Latin rite.’<sup>4</sup> At the time of this interview, fourteen years had already passed since the adoption of the *conciliar Constitution on the liturgy*.

It therefore seems worthwhile to revisit the text of Pius XII and reflect on its main teachings, whilst considering certain aspects of its history and some of its effects. That is precisely my intention today, and indeed one could do no more within the limited scope of a presentation.

## 2. On the reasons why the encyclical was written

### 2.1 The liturgical movement

In many respects, the encyclical *Mediator Dei* can be seen as a reaction against certain trends within the liturgical movement that had developed since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, mainly in France and Germany, but also in some neighbouring countries such as Belgium. The aim of this movement was to encourage Catholics to participate more deeply in the celebration of the liturgy. This *participation* was to stem from a better *understanding* of the liturgy and a greater knowledge of its *history*.

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<sup>1</sup> Lecture given at the 2nd C.I.E.L. symposium, October 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Cardinal Joseph RATZINGER: *La Célébration de la foi*, published by Pierre Téqui, Paris 1995, pp. 77 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

This movement tended to regard as normative what was believed to be known about the early Church. To summarise what has been called the ‘theory of Christian Antiquity’, Josef Andreas Jungmann, SJ, one of the most important figures of this movement and who continued to exert an active influence after the Council, wrote in 1970: “It is the community gathered for the Eucharist that presents the holy offerings in the body and blood of Christ .5”

Several key concepts are evident in this sentence: the event, which is called ‘Eucharist’, the ‘community’, which moreover appears to be active, and the presentation of the body and blood of Christ ‘in’ the holy offerings. In a broader Catholic context, this sentence would appear dogmatically correct and go unnoticed.

No doubt this is how many of those who joined the liturgical movement perceived it. The ‘points of rupture’ only became apparent later. For most authors, the sense of the Catholic faith—but also, perhaps for some, the concern for the imprimatur—meant that, at the outset, the deviations were minimal.

And it is, paradoxically, in the commentary in the famous *Lexicon für Theologie und Kirche*, regarding the *Council’s Constitution on the Liturgy*, that Jungmann clarifies his thinking: “The reform attempts of the sixteenth century”, in German-speaking countries, “were taken up again... towards the early 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>6</sup>” This reference to the liturgical reformers of the Enlightenment, in the manner of Wessenberg, is accompanied by a strong critique of the post-Tridentine era. “The tension between post-Tridentine theology and *the Ordo missae* handed down by ancient tradition had become too great : on the one hand, the still simple modes of thought, received with gratitude and praise from the time of the Church Fathers, content with a simple ‘we’ to present the offerings and ask God to receive and bless them; on the other, the ever-new conceptions of a theory of destruction [*as a mark of a victim – Editor’s note*], which now saw nothing but the process of transubstantiation.<sup>7</sup>” “It is no longer merely the Latin language that has become alien to the Christian people; it is the very essence of the piety of the Roman liturgy.” For Jungmann, popular piety “turns much more to secondary mediations than to the mystery of Christ .8”

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<sup>5</sup> Josef Andreas JUNGSMANN: *Messe im Gottesvolk. Ein nachkonziliarer Durchblick durch Missarum Sollemnia*, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1970, pp. 7 ff. In this work, he refers to Charles RUCH: “La Messe d’après les Pères jusqu’à saint Cyprien”, in *DThC X* (1928), 963.

<sup>6</sup> JUNGSMANN, in: *LThK* 12, p. 10. In fact, for Jungmann the “decisive turning point” was the speech delivered by Lambert Beauduin in 1909 at the *Katholikentag* in Mechelen.

<sup>7</sup> JUNGSMANN, in: *Messe*, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> JUNGSMANN, in: *LThK* 12, p. 10.

Of course, until the end of Pius XII's pontificate, what was written was more moderate, and it is certain that many did not share these ideas; yet men such as Odon Casel, Romano Guardini or Pius Parsch, to name but three German-speaking authors, used formulations that were at times ambiguous, which were radicalised by some of their successors.

The links that were established between different countries also date from the interwar period. Thus, the Burg Rothenfels youth movement was a prime setting for Fr Doncoeur's efforts to use the liturgy as a pedagogical tool, which made him, perhaps unconsciously, a precursor to the diversion of the liturgy for anthropocentric purposes.<sup>9</sup> The publication of journals and the creation of book series—notably the founding of Éditions du Cerf in 1932—helped to strengthen the liturgical movement both in terms of its dissemination and its organisation.

The National Socialists' seizure of power in Germany in 1933 did not halt the liturgical movement. On the contrary, as opportunities for action were reduced, if not entirely eliminated, in the political and social spheres, in associations, in journalism and in schools, activity shifted, by way of compensation, to the internal affairs of the Church—where obstacles were few—and in particular to the liturgy.<sup>10</sup> The liturgical experiments that took place at that time in Rothenfels and elsewhere—including, in both Germany and France, the celebration facing the people and the use of the vernacular—triggered reactions which, through books, also reached the general public.<sup>11</sup>

## 2.2 The 'truce'

However, almost all those involved wished to avoid public quarrels within Catholicism, under the watchful eye of the National Socialist state. Unlike Protestantism, which was torn apart and even divided, the Catholic Church in Germany presented a remarkable united front in the face of National Socialist persecution. The bishops were determined by every means to maintain this solidarity in the eyes of the outside world. Even those who criticised the liturgical experiments desired this solidarity, and in particular the uniformity of the liturgy. It fell to the bishops to maintain this uniformity. And indeed, they took it upon themselves: in 1940, they established a 'department

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<sup>9</sup> *The Origins of the C.P.L. 1943–1949*, R.P. DUPLOYE, p. 338.

<sup>10</sup> "The Liturgical Movement in Germany", J. WAGNER in *La Maison-Dieu* no. 25, 1951.

<sup>11</sup> Through works such as *Irrwege und Umwege der Frömmigkeit* by Max KASSIPE and *Sentire cum Ecclesia* by DOERNER.

liturgical” of the Bishops’ Conference, himself assisted by a “liturgical commission .12”

However, and this was the crux of the matter, experts from the liturgical movement held key positions within these bodies. The Episcopal Conference’s rapporteur for liturgical matters was Bishop Albert Stohr of Mainz—a friend of Guardini’s. The proposal had been put forward by Bishop Simon Conrad Landesdorfer, OSB, Bishop of Passau, who was working with Stohr on behalf of the Bishops’ Conference .<sup>13</sup> Already the previous year, at a meeting in Fulda in 1939, Landesdorfer, as well as Guardini and Fr Josef Andreas Jungmann, had emerged as the driving forces behind the movement.

A long letter sent by Guardini to Bishop Stohr in 1940 is characteristic of his assessment of the situation, as well as of the way in which he succeeded in exerting influence on the episcopate and the Catholic people .<sup>14</sup>

In it, Guardini discusses four erroneous attitudes that are significant in liturgical matters: liturgism, pragmatism, dilettantism and conservatism.

For Guardini, *liturgism* is the tendency to accord the liturgy an importance it does not possess. <sup>15</sup> Such an error occurs when one begins by underestimating what is important, before rediscovering it and finally overestimating it. Thus the liturgy comes to be ‘often regarded as constituting Christian-Catholic religious life proper e16’, the monastic community, completely cut off from reality, being presented as the model of community. This forced and exaggerated conception is characterised by a “distinctly aesthetic mode of thought and sensibility 17” which, ultimately, runs counter to both popular and personal piety and is only accentuated by the “disciple generation”.

For Guardini, another error, of the opposite kind, is *pragmatism*. This ‘seeks to help people come to terms with the conditions of modern life from a Christian perspective’; thus, ‘it has shifted the focus of pastoral activity to the realms of organisation and pedagogy’... In doing so, it “has often failed to recognise the essence of religious life, its inner meaning and

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. JUNGSMANN: *LThK* 12, p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. the report on this point by Johann WAGNER, who later became director of the Liturgical Institute of Trier, in issue 25 of *La Maison-Dieu*, 1951.

<sup>14</sup> Extensive excerpts from this letter were included in the ‘working document’ entitled: *Unser Gottesdienst* published by Alfons Kirchgässner ‘on behalf of the Commission’ (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1960) (pp. 3 ff.). A characteristic feature of the virtually boundless prestige enjoyed by Guardini within German Catholicism is that, at the time of the impending rupture around 1960, his contribution was placed at the forefront of this official collective work, which was intended to chart the course to be followed.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

“its dignity, which cannot be subordinated to any material objective”. He sometimes went “as far as regarding prayer, man’s gratuitous absorption in eternal things, and holy service before the face of God as a waste of time. 18” The liturgy is then “something useless and superfluous”; thus, in keeping with the spirit of the age and to be more effective, one would rather “put put it at the service of moral actions or other stimulating undertakings .19” “But, in doing so, *pragmatism* has misunderstood the primary and most important meaning of the liturgy, ... for the liturgy is all the richer in blessings because it is gratuitous .20” Yes, but *pragmatism* “wanted direct, rapid... and tangible results .2021”

As for *dilettantism*, it occurs when an orientation ‘imposed by the general public forces its way into the conscience<sup>22</sup>’; it is then ‘a topical issue—an important but also dangerous moment<sup>23</sup>’ ‘Many have undertaken, full of good intentions, to modify the liturgy of the divine worship<sup>24</sup>’, but often with harmful consequences. “Starting from the idea that Since people can only pray in the language in which they live, importance was attached to German. Convinced of the importance of liturgical symbols, attempts were made to highlight them more clearly and to give the sacred rites a more popular appearance .25 ’ In this area, there were ‘serious shortcomings’ and, as a result, it sometimes appeared ‘that people knew neither Latin nor German. What was serious, moreover, was that other themes were associated with the liturgical theme, such as confused ideas about the place of the laity in the Church or the relationship between ethics and religion, etc. .26” It should be noted, however, that in this assessment of liturgical dilettantism, Guardini does not include disobedience to Church leaders and canonical norms.

It was in reaction to these errors, Guardini continues, that the reservations of the representatives of ‘conservatism’ were formulated. ‘And they were right on all these points, but they themselves succumbed to the danger of rejecting everything to which they were not accustomed . 27’ They do not understand

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

not that ‘the elements abandoned by those they criticise stem from the most religiously barren period of the nineteenth century, and that these elements themselves have supplanted many of the riches of ecclesial piety .<sup>28</sup>’ According to Guardini, the proponents of ‘conservatism’ equate the Holy Mass with highly dubious popular and private devotions; the practice of the sacraments is “detached from its important context to become a purely external rite .<sup>29</sup>” For his part, he fears “that people will be driven away from the Church by imposing on them forms of devotion that are largely outdated .<sup>30</sup>” In short, even conservative forces often lack “a proper understanding of what the liturgy truly is”; many see in it “only the outward aspect, without truly understanding its meaning .<sup>31</sup>”

The important thing, of course, is to see what advice Guardini gives to the bishops, on the basis of this essentially accurate description of the errors he observes. Firstly, he warns them against the “danger of administrative intervention”<sup>32</sup> — and, in this regard, it is worth noting that, on numerous occasions, he uses the term “administration” to refer to ecclesiastical authorities ...

He writes: ‘It is only natural that the Church administration should intervene against arbitrary innovations that have been sanctioned neither by the ministry nor by the competent authority [*he thus sees two possible justifications here*] ... Furthermore, it is essential that they do not withdraw their trust from those who have long been working seriously and responsibly in these areas, and that they protect them against attacks that call into question their convictions and their work .<sup>33</sup>’ Thus, Guardini does not merely demand freedom for the liturgical movement; he also calls upon the bishops—as early as 1940—to protect its representatives from criticism. He continues: ‘Liturgical work needs, above all, time... We know that it is asking a great deal to leave matters in abeyance for the time being. But, to achieve something worthwhile, there is no other way; and what would be far worse than temporary uncertainty would be measures that would prevent work begun several decades ago from bearing fruit just as it is beginning to ripen .<sup>34</sup>’

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Guardini goes so far as to add: ‘I know enough about the theory and practice to be able to give an answer [*to these problems*] that cannot be ignored; but I do not wish to do so .35’ Whatever these words may conceal, the bishops gave the liturgical movement — including its most radical supporters — the time required for it to occupy, under the bishops’ protection, an increasing number of key positions and for numerous abuses to be tolerated as forgivable excesses of zeal.

During the war and in the period that followed, the liturgical movement took root not only in Germany but also in France, the position of most French bishops being identical to that of their German counterparts. In 1943, under the direction of Dom Beauduin, the Centre de pastorale liturgique was established, which would subsequently publish the journal *La Maison-Dieu* and, in association with Éditions du Cerf, the *Lex orandi* series.

### 2.3. The Birth of the Encyclical

In this context, how was the encyclical *Mediator Dei* nevertheless able to be drafted? As far as I am aware, we unfortunately have no documents shedding light on the involvement of those who contributed to the drafts of this encyclical, whereas we are better informed, for example, regarding the encyclicals *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931)<sup>36</sup> and *Mit brennender Sorge* (1937)<sup>37</sup> by Pius XI. We do know, in any case, that despite all the burdens weighing upon him

— the Holy See being situated at the heart of the Fascist and National Socialist empires — Pius XII was not only concerned with political events and their assessment in relation to pastoral care and moral theology, but also closely followed developments in the fields of dogmatics and liturgy. In this regard, his remarkable knowledge of the situation in Germany and of the German language was of great assistance to him.

One might ask whether, in such turbulent historical times, the Pope did not have ‘better things to do’, but that would be to misunderstand Pius XII’s conception of his task, and it would not correspond to the tradition of the Church either. Consider, for example, the year 1794. At that time, which was also particularly critical, the Church had ‘nothing better to do’ than to deal with an Italian regional synod that had been held eight years earlier: the Synod of Pistoia. Its

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>36</sup> Oswald VON NELL-BREUNING: ‘Octogesimo Anno’, in: *Stimmen der Zeit*, 1971, pp. 289 ff.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. e.g. Dieter ALBRECHT (ed.): *Der Notenwechsel zwischen dem Heiligenstuhl und der deutschen Reichsregierung I*, Mainz 1965, esp. pp. 402 ff.

The graduated condemnations of certain ambiguous phrases<sup>s38</sup> constituted, from the perspective of dogmatic theology and Church history, an important event which at the time bore witness to genuine pastoral concern and to which, moreover, the encyclical *Mediator Dei* explicitly refers.<sup>39</sup>

In the midst of the war, in June 1943, the encyclical on the Church, *Mystici Corporis*, was published, which is of great importance; and a good four years later, whilst Italy was in a critical phase with the expansion of the communists, the encyclical *Mediator Dei* on the liturgy was published.

It is certain, in any case, that its preparation took into account, to some extent, a letter sent in 1943 by Archbishop Gröber of Freiburg to the German episcopate. In seventeen points, Archbishop Gröber criticises erroneous dogmatic assertions concerning, directly or indirectly, the field of the liturgy, which are also taken up by the encyclical *Mediator Dei*.<sup>40</sup> Among these assertions, we may mention in particular errors concerning the Church, the mystical body of Christ, and an exaggerated emphasis on the aspect of the meal in the Holy Mass, etc.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, excessive emphasis is placed on the common priesthood of all the faithful to the detriment of the sacramental priesthood, with all the consequences this entails in the field of liturgy, such as the expansion of the role of the laity in participation in the Holy Mass as well as the use of the vernacular. On all these points, reference was often made, by way of justification, to former times, which were regarded as normative for the present.<sup>42</sup>

In contrast to what Guardini thought and said in 1940, Bishop Gröber made it clear that recent practices were supplanting valid norms; he, too, therefore urged the bishops to intervene, but in his case against the errors as such, and expressly wishing that Rome should intervene directly in this process.<sup>43</sup>

And indeed Cardinal Bertram, President of the Bishops' Conference, sent a memorandum to Rome; characteristically, however, it defended the liturgical movement and encouraged liturgical reforms. As for the reply from Cardinal Maglione, Secretary of State, it is relatively open and allows the German bishops a certain degree of leeway.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Cf. Denzinger-Hünemann (DH): 2600–2700.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. MD p. 24; AAS 546 ff.

<sup>40</sup> For example, his criticism of archaeologism in point 5, or on the confusion between the hierarchical priesthood and the priesthood of the baptised in point 13.

<sup>41</sup> Point 14.

<sup>42</sup> Point 5.

<sup>43</sup> Point 17.

<sup>44</sup> See the commentary by F. KOLBE in *La Maison-Dieu* no. 74, 1963.

Thus they continued to grant the imprimatur provided that the authors took care not to openly express theories that were too radical. Cardinal Ratzinger mentions an important work in this regard: *Eucharistia. Gestalt und Vollzug*, by Joseph Pascher, published in 1947, just before the publication of the encyclical. As Guardini and others had done before him, Pascher states: “The ‘basic’ form is that of the meal .45” But, in his view, this form of the meal does not in any case exclude the dogmatic conception of sacrifice; on the contrary, elements of sacrifice can very well be found in the symbolism of the meal .46

Efforts at renewal proved even more promising when their arguments were based on pastoral considerations. This was, moreover, the approach recommended in 1945 by Dom Lambert Beauduin from the very first issue of *\*La Maison-Dieu\**, in which he presented ‘Practical Guidelines for Liturgical Reforms’. Through sympathetic bishops, and whilst preserving the established order, one could hope to achieve success in Rome, particularly within the Congregation for Rites. ‘We must proceed hierarchically... Proceed patiently... Prepare minds... Emphasise also the moral and practical aspects... The Church is not afraid to modify its discipline for the good of its children.’”

These efforts were coordinated internationally through meetings, for example with the German Catholic Church, which, even immediately after the war, was not isolated within the Church. There were even already “contacts with representatives of the various Christian Churches”, as Fr Duployé, one of the movement’s leading figures, later admitted .47 Fr Duployé recounted an incident that occurred on the fringes of a liturgical meeting held at Le Thieulin, near Chartres, attended by, amongst others, forty superiors and seminary directors: ‘A few days before the Thieulin meeting, I had been visited by an Italian Lazarist, Fr Bugnini, who had asked me to invite him. The priest listened very attentively without saying a word for four days. As we were returning to Paris..., he said to me: ‘I admire what you are doing, but the greatest service I can do for you is never to say a word in Rome about anything I have just heard’ .48”

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<sup>45</sup> Quoted from RATZINGER: *The Celebration of Faith*, p. 37.

<sup>46</sup> *Cf. op. cit.*, pp. 37 ff.

<sup>47</sup> *The Origins of the C.P.L.* 1943–1949, R.P. DUPLOYE, p. 338.

<sup>48</sup> *The Origins of the C.P.L.* 1943–1949, R.P. DUPLOYE, p. 338.

### 3. The main themes of the encyclical

#### 3.1 Fundamental definitions

The encyclical *Mediator Dei*<sup>49</sup> is striking for the depth of its assertions. In contrast to what is sometimes found in later magisterial texts, it is characterised by simple and clear language. Although it often endeavours to present a particular theme—or even a rejected position—fairly and in a nuanced manner, it contains no ‘compromise formula’ that would seek, at the expense of clarity or even truth, to strike a ‘balance’ between incompatible positions.

As for the liturgy, Pius XII also takes Christ as his starting point. He is the *Mediator Dei*, who is presented here, above all, as the eternal High Priest. He wishes “that the worship instituted and offered during his life on earth should continue without interruption , no.<sup>50</sup>”. By this, we must understand above all what he did on Holy Thursday and Good Friday: “At the Last Supper, employing a solemn rite and ceremony, he celebrates the new Passover and ensures its continuation through the divine institution of the Eucharist; the following day, raised between heaven and earth, he offers his life as a sacrifice to save us.<sup>51</sup>” “The priesthood of Jesus Christ fulfils its role throughout the centuries<sup>52</sup>,” says the Pope. The reason for this is the presence of Christ. On numerous occasions, to clarify the concepts he is discussing, the Pope refers to the doctrine of the ‘Mystical Body of Christ’, which is the Church.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, the fundamental concepts of his 1943 encyclical *Mystici Corporis* are both the premises and the foundation of everything he teaches in this encyclical. Thus, he says, Christ and the Church have ‘in common with the

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<sup>49</sup> The Latin text can be found in *AAS* 1947, pp. 521–595, with an index on pp. 596–600. In addition to an edition published by Herder, an official German version of this text with an imprimatur appeared in 1948 from Badenia in Karlsruhe. Unfortunately, neither of these editions is available in bookshops. For those interested, it is easier to obtain the private edition by Karl Haselböck (Vienna 1995) in the series *Freude an der Wahrheit* (no. 127). The quotations from the German text are taken from this edition. Haselböck’s edition strives to provide a more elegant translation. Thus, the expression ‘*scriptores effutiunt*’ (*AAS* p. 580), translated in the 1948 edition as: ‘writers speak’, is rendered by Haselböck as: ‘writers speak thoughtlessly’. However, as far as I can tell, the translation as a whole is not incorrect. It remains nonetheless regrettable – and characteristic of the current state of German-speaking Catholicism – that a number of important texts are only republished in full by this publisher, whose stance towards the current hierarchy is highly critical.

The Badenia edition includes (pp. 3–14) a commentary by Prof. Klaudius JÜSSEN of Freiburg, which in any case never goes beyond the text of the encyclical (with one exception: when he mentions the ‘theology of the mysteries’ in connection with MD 56/580). He correctly presents the essential points, duly emphasises the Pope’s warnings, but—in keeping with the esprit de corps of the time—spares the authors in question, without naming them.

The French translation is that of the *Documentation catholique*, published as a booklet.

<sup>50</sup> MD 7/527 – In this citation, as in the following ones, the first number refers to the page of the French edition and the second to the page of *the AAS*.

<sup>51</sup> MD 6/527.

<sup>52</sup> MD 9/529.

<sup>53</sup> Thus, for example, from page 2/522.

The Incarnate Word: the aim, the duty and the function...<sup>54</sup> “In every liturgical action, together with the Church, her divine Founder is present .<sup>55</sup>” This presence of Christ is realised in many ways, to the extent that Pius XII does not hesitate to rank them in order of importance when he says:

“Christ is present in the holy sacrifice of the altar, either in the person of his minister or, above all, under the Eucharistic species; he is present in the sacraments by the power he infuses into them...; finally, he is present in the praises and prayers addressed to God, according to the words of Christ: ‘Where two or three are gathered in my name...’ ” This classification, unpalatable to many, was subsequently amended .<sup>56</sup> The *conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy* also introduced significant changes on this point .<sup>57</sup>

Undoubtedly, Pius XII had all too many reasons, in 1947, to address positions which, drawing on Odon Casel’s ‘theology of the mysteries’, sought to see in the liturgy only the glorified Christ, but not the ‘historical’ Christ. For the Pope, such a separation was unthinkable: “The sacred liturgy presents to our eyes the whole of Christ and in all the circumstances of his life...: Jesus Christ yesterday and today, the same for ever . 58”

According to Pius XII’s definition, the liturgy “represents the integral worship of the Mystical Body of

Jesus Christ, that is to say, of the Head and his members . 59” In this sense, “its object is the sacrifice, the sacraments and the praise to be rendered to God. It is likewise its task to unite our souls to Christ and to lead them to holiness through the divine Redeemer, so that glory may be rendered to Christ, and through him and in him, to the Most Holy Trinity <sup>60</sup>”. This “Trinitarian” perspective is also a fundamental feature of the encyclical. The Pope presents in moving terms the full range of the liturgy’s effects on man and his life: it helps and exhorts us to holiness, enriches us through Baptism, strengthens us through Confirmation, consoles and reconciles us in Confession, gives us strength in marriage, and accompanies us as

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<sup>54</sup> MD 7/527-528.

<sup>55</sup> MD 8/528.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. e.g. the brief critical study presented by Cardinals OTTAVIANI and BACCI: ‘Kurze kritische Untersuchung des neuen Ordo missae’, in: *Schriftenreihe der Una Voce*, issue no. 4/1969, p. 9; or also, by Karl LEHMANN and Wolfhart PANNENBERG: *Lehrverurteilungen – kirchentrennend?*, vol. I, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1987, p. 107, with note 47a; regarding Mt 18:20, see also RATZINGER: *Ein neues Lied für den Herrn*, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1995, pp. 146–147.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. SC 7 and Jungmann’s commentary on this subject, pp. 20–21, as well as the present exposition.

<sup>58</sup> MD 55/579.

<sup>59</sup> MD 55/579.

<sup>60</sup> MD 59/583.

viaticum in the grave, it consecrates and blesses, especially in ordination, and it helps the souls in purgatory .<sup>61</sup>

We may therefore say: ‘The whole liturgy therefore contains the Catholic faith, inasmuch as it publicly attests to the faith of the Church .62’ And, of course, Pius XII sees the link between *lex orandi* and *lex credendi*. However, the liturgy is not ‘a sort of experience of the truths to be held as articles of faith .6363’ which should, as it were, prove themselves within the rite. And, to ‘discern and determine in an absolute and general way’, he much prefers the formula: *Lex credendi legem statuat supplicandi* — Let the rule of belief establish the rule of prayer .<sup>64</sup>

However, “the culmination and, as it were, the centre of the Christian religion is the mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist.” This is therefore “the principal matter of the liturgy .65” And that is why we shall dwell at greater length on this particular aspect in the light of the encyclical.

### 3.2 Sacrifice and meal

Echoing the words of the Council of Trent, Pius XII recalls that, in the sacrifice of the Mass, “the sacrifice of the Cross is perpetually represented (*repraesentatur*) and renewed (*renovatur*), the only difference being in the manner of its offering .66” As the Pope emphasises, it is therefore not “a mere commemoration,... but a true sacrifice, in the proper sense... a bloodless immolation .67”

It is indeed the same priest, Christ, whom the priest represents; it is the same offering, and the Eucharistic elements “symbolise the violent separation of body and soul ng68”; the aims of the sacrifice are the same: the glorification of the heavenly Father, the thanksgiving due to God and, thirdly, expiation, propitiation and reconciliation. Undoubtedly, Christ redeemed us on Calvary; ‘this redemption, however, does not immediately achieve its full effect.’ On the contrary, ‘it is absolutely necessary for each individual to enter into a vital relationship with the sacrifice of the Crucif x.69’

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<sup>61</sup> Cf. MD 9/530.

<sup>62</sup> MD 18/540.

<sup>63</sup> MD 18/540.

<sup>64</sup> MD 19/541.

<sup>65</sup> MD 25/547.

<sup>66</sup> MD 2/522. See also the corresponding passage in MD 69/594: ‘The Eucharistic sacrifice, representation and renewal of the sacrifice of the Cross’.

<sup>67</sup> MD 25/548.

<sup>68</sup> MD 26/548.

<sup>69</sup> MD 27–28/550–551.

And this is precisely what takes place in the Holy Mass.

It is from this perspective that Pius XII views the liturgical life of the early Church, which replaced the Old Testament worship—a “shadow”<sup>70</sup> of the worship of Christ: “Wherever pastors can gather a group of the faithful, they set up an altar on which they offer the sacrifice and around which other rites take place ...71”

Of course, the Pope is well aware that the term *Eucharistia* means ‘thanksgiving’,<sup>p. 72</sup>; this does not, however, prevent him—in order to make things clearer—from most often speaking of ‘sacrifice’ or using equivalent terms, p. 73

And, in the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments, *efficacy* ‘derives first and foremost from the action itself (“*ex opere operato*”)<sup>74</sup>; however, one may speak of an efficacy “*ex opere operantis*”, when the efficacy of an action depends not on the good will of a participant but rather “on the action of the Church (*ex opere operantis Ecclesiae*)’, as she is holy and closely united to her Head in all her activity.”

Although Pius XII generally employs unambiguous concepts—he refers, for example, to “the ‘transubstantiation’ of bread into the Body of Christ<sup>75</sup>”—he nonetheless uses the term “*sacra synaxis*” found in the *Novus Ordo Missae* ae76, albeit in a significantly more restricted sense: exclusively in relation to the reception of Communion and not to denote the sacrifice of the Mass. In doing so, he also clarifies here the usage of the term by the early Church, noted for example by Cardinal Ratzinger<sup>i r77</sup>, stating: ‘It must once again be noted that the Eucharistic sacrifice consists essentially in the bloodless immolation

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<sup>70</sup> MD 6/526.

<sup>71</sup> MD 8/529.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. MD 43/566: “*ipsum altaris sacrificium per se gratiarum sit actio*”.

<sup>73</sup> Taking the opposite view to this position, LENGELING emphasised as early as 1960 “that... the Canon (and thus the celebration of Mass, which forms its centre) is the Eucharist” (“Überwundenes in der Meßerklärung” in: Kirchgässner (ed.): *Unser Gottesdienst*, p. 26).

<sup>74</sup> MD 11/532. MD 11/532.

<sup>75</sup> MD 28/548.

<sup>76</sup> In the famous § 7 of the *Institutio generalis* which preceded the new *Ordo*, a paragraph amended due to certain protests it had raised. See on this point OTTAVIANI/BACCI, *op. cit.*, p. 7; see also Georg MAY: “Die alte und die neue Messe” (published in particular in issue no. 8/1975 of the series *Una Voce Deutschland*, pp. 61 ff.)

<sup>77</sup> “The ‘community’ is the new discovery of the post-conciliar era. We have recalled that, in the language of the early Church, the Eucharist was known, among other things, by the name of *synaxis*, ‘gathering’.” RATZINGER: *The Celebration of Faith*, p. 140.

of the divine victim... Holy Communion (*sacra synaxis*) ensures its integrity and aims to enable participants to share in it sacramentally .78”

He therefore refutes those who “dangerously assert that it is not merely a sacrifice, but a sacrifice and a meal of fraternal communion, and place the communion celebrated in common (*sacra synaxis*) as the culmination of the entire ceremony .79”

Pius XII therefore already saw clearly where these ideas would lead in our own day, and explicitly rejected them: this should not be forgotten when, all too often, people speak of continuity without rupture between our own era and that of Pius XII.

This theme relates to the communion of the faithful. Of course, the Pope recommends frequent communion for the faithful, following appropriate preparation; he is very clear on this point<sup>80</sup>; he specifies, however, that it is not the communion of the faithful but that of the priest which is absolutely indispensable for the validity of the sacrifice of the Mass .<sup>81</sup> When the Mass is celebrated in the presence of the faithful, the latter must, ‘when they cannot actually receive the Eucharistic food’, receive it ‘at least in their desire .82’

In line with the Council of Trent, the encyclical certainly encourages the faithful to “the sacramental reception of the Eucharist, so that the fruit of this most holy sacrifice may reach them more abundantly .83” But the Pope adds, following his predecessor Benedict XIV (1742): ‘Moreover, in order to make it better known, and more clearly, that through the reception of the divine Eucharist the faithful participate in the sacrifice itself’, he ‘praises the piety of those who, not only desire to be nourished by the heavenly bread when they attend the sacrifice, but also wish to receive the hosts consecrated in that very sacrifice. <sup>84</sup>’ Of course, true participation in the sacrifice does not depend on this, and there are many reasons to receive Communion outside of Holy Mass; however, in reference to the words of the canon: “*ut quotquot ex hac altaris participatione ... sumpsim us*<sup>85</sup>”, the priest must fulfil this wish when the faithful request it.

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<sup>78</sup> MD 40/563.

<sup>79</sup> 39-40/563.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. e.g. MD 41/565.

<sup>81</sup> MD 39/563.

<sup>82</sup> MD 39/563.

<sup>83</sup> MD *ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> MD 40–41/564.

<sup>85</sup> ‘That all of us who participate in this sacrifice’ (quoted in MD 42/565).

It is not surprising that this passage from the encyclical is precisely one of the few to be quoted with approval by authors who, moreover, are largely at odds with the theology of Pius XII. But we shall return to this.

### 3.3 The priest and the people

Without prejudice to the doctrine of the priesthood of all the faithful, which was of course reiterated on several occasions by Pius X<sup>1186</sup>, one may, from the perspective of “the very nature of worship”, understand the Catholic liturgy as presented in *Mediator Dei* as a priestly liturgy: indeed, it “is performed primarily by priests in the name of the Church”.<sup>87</sup> Just as, through baptism, the faithful are set apart and made distinct from other people by ‘an indelible character indelible character e88’, “so too the sacrament of Holy Orders sets priests apart from the other faithful of Christ .89” Being, in its immutability, an image of the heavenly hierarchy, *the Ordo* is “conferred upon chosen men and constitutes a sort of spiritual generation .90” They alone possess certain powers and are therefore ‘empowered to perform’ certain acts.<sup>91</sup>

The mission therefore has its origin in God, in the sense of John 20:21. The Pope specifies that the priesthood “does not emanate... from the Christian community, nor is it a delegation from the people .92” Consequently, the priest “represents God before the people entrusted to his care. ’ It is only through this, and subsequently, that he can ‘represent the people before God u.93’

Here again, it is essential to see Christ: “The priest stands in the place of the people solely because he represents the person of Our Lord Jesus Christ as the head of all the members offering himself for them; when he approaches the altar, it is therefore as a minister of Christ, subordinate to Christ, but superior to the people. The people, on the contrary, playing no part whatsoever in the role of the divine Redeemer, and not acting as mediators between themselves and God, cannot in any way enjoy the priestly right . 94” And the Pope adds: “These truths are of faith

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<sup>86</sup> Cf. e.g. MD 36/557.

<sup>87</sup> MD 17/539.

<sup>88</sup> MD 17/539.

<sup>89</sup> MD 17/539.

<sup>90</sup> MD 16/538–539.

<sup>91</sup> MD 16/538.

<sup>92</sup> MD 16/538.

<sup>93</sup> MD 16/538. On Pius XII’s doctrine on the priesthood, see also, for example, the address *Sollemnis conventus* of 24 June 1939 (in: *AAS* 31/1939, pp. 245–251) as well as the Apostolic Exhortation *Menti nostrae* of 23 September 1950 (in: *AAS* 42/1950, pp. 657–702; in French: *Documentation catholique* 1950, col. 1345 ff.)

<sup>94</sup> MD 31/553–554.

.95” And this is also why he rejects the assertions that “a single and identical grace... unites Christ with the members of his Mystical Body .96”

It is also in this context that the question of the people’s participation in the sacrifice of the Mass must be addressed. The Pope rejects the views of those who “consider that the Eucharistic sacrifice is, strictly speaking, a ‘concelebration’ and that priests should ‘concelebrate’ with the people present, rather than offering the sacrifice privately in the absence of the people .97”

Pius XII acknowledges that the faithful, too, present the offerings; however, they do so “in a different manner .98” This is, moreover, what *the Ordo missae* demonstrates, which, on numerous occasions emphasises this distinction, which the Pope cites here: ‘... whether in *the Orationes fratres* — where it says: ‘... my sacrifice which is also yours ’<sup>99</sup> — or in the Canon, where the priest says: ‘For whom we offer to you’ or ‘who offer to you...’ and, further on: ‘... this offering of your servants and of your whole household’, or again, finally: ‘We, your servants, together with your holy people, offer ’...<sup>100</sup>

So how does the people offer the sacrifice? Pius XII begins by citing a number of ‘more remote reasons , s. 101’ which were, however, brought to the fore by the so-called liturgical reform: the responses given by the faithful to the priest’s prayers, the offering of bread and wine, or the alms given to the priest with the aim ‘of having the divine victim offered up for themselves , s. 102 ’ He then moves on to the deeper reasons: the people offer the sacrifice “through the hands of the priest”, because they “unite their prayers of praise, supplication, expiation and thanksgiving with the priest’s prayers or mental intentions... in order to present them to God the Father . 103”

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<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> MD 69/593.

<sup>97</sup> MD 30/553. It should be noted that this is the only passage in the encyclical where the term “concelebration” is used. Pius XII undoubtedly had to address the issue of “concelebration” as we understand it today on several occasions during the 1950s, but in most cases he did so only in the form of addresses. On this point, reference should be made in particular to the paper presented by Bishop SCHMITZ during last year’s symposium, in: *La Liturgie, Trésor de l’Église*, pp. 119 ff.

<sup>98</sup> MD 31/554.

<sup>99</sup> It is characteristic that, specifically regarding this formula, the ‘Studien und Entwürfen’ (Studies and Drafts) of the Liturgical Commission of German-speaking countries state that it is ‘not uncontested.’ For this reason, the Commission believes that this form ‘should be abolished without being replaced.’ In: Nagel, p. 38.

<sup>100</sup> Quoted from MD 32/554.

<sup>101</sup> MD 32/555.

<sup>102</sup> *Cf.* MD 32/555.

<sup>103</sup> MD 33/556.

The Pope likewise rejects the arguments of those who, even at that time, relying on ‘the social nature’ of the Mass, wished to see the respective roles of the priest and the people altered:

“This sacrifice, everywhere and always, necessarily and by its very nature, has a public and social character”, whether or not the faithful attend Mass .<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, the fact that the sacrifice of the Mass is celebrated simultaneously at several altars does not alienate the community nor endanger its unity, nor is it necessary for the people to “confirm and approve the sacrifice in order for it to obtain its value and efficacy .105”

Thus, in this context, to say that the liturgy is merely the ‘gathering of the faithful’ would already be—as Cardinal Ratzinger points out—a revolution in itself, even if one were to invoke the text referring to ‘two or three gathered’ in Christ’s name. Such a definition effectively means: “It is not the Church that comes before the group, but the group before the Church”, and it would then be the group that, consequently, would be the “original of origin” of the liturgy. 106” Finally, this definition leads to a “dogmatisation of the’ and to a ‘ al egalitarianism’ incompatible with the established Catholic doctrine regarding the relationship between the priest and the people in the liturgy.

### 3.4 Liturgy and Piety

Pius XII emphasises very clearly that, in the celebration of Mass, the founder’s will must be precisely fulfilled. However, the external and perceptible celebration—this ‘objective piety’—must be accompanied by an inner, personal, ‘subjective’ piety, so that the rite performed does not become an empty ritual. But, he adds, for the Mass to have ‘the required efficacy, it is absolutely necessary that souls be well disposed’, and the ‘active efforts .<sup>108</sup> As for the means to be employed to this end, the Pope cites a certain number: he commends the use of the missal, chant and the solemn Mass, but only insofar as ‘these forms of participation in the sacrifice... scrupulously observe the precepts of the Church and the rules of sacred rites .<sup>109</sup>’ On the other hand, he criticises those who attach ‘exaggerated importance’ to ‘these secondary conditions’, believing that Mass can only be celebrated in this

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<sup>104</sup> MD 34/557.

<sup>105</sup> MD 33-34/557.

<sup>106</sup> RATZINGER: *Ein neues Lied*, p. 146.

<sup>107</sup> RATZINGER: *ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>108</sup> MD 12/533–534; cf. also MD 10/530 ff.

<sup>109</sup> MD 37/560.

way; for Pius XII, ‘it is to stray from the truth and from right reason’. The Pope is, of course, well aware that many of the faithful cannot use the missal, even in their mother tongue, and, moreover, that spiritual needs are different and may change. He therefore considers that Christians may ‘enjoy the benefits’ of the Eucharistic sacrifice in other forms, such as ‘meditating devoutly..., performing other acts of piety . 110” Thus, the Pope proves that he is a better psychologist than today’s pastoral specialists—and he grants greater freedom than they do.

One matter particularly close to his heart is the thanksgiving following the reception of Holy Communion and after Mass. Here again, he criticises those who, ‘attaching more importance to words than to the thought behind them’, deem it unnecessary, considering ‘that the sacrifice of the altar is in itself an act of thanksgiving’ and that personal thanksgiving brings no benefit to the community .<sup>111</sup> He therefore reminds priests in particular of their duty to recite the prayers of thanksgiving, just as, indeed, they must prepare themselves properly .<sup>112</sup>

From this necessity to give thanks naturally follow, on the one hand, the offering that the faithful make of themselves — which, certainly, is fulfilled in the Holy Sacrifice, but which must also encompass their whole life <sup>e113</sup> — and, on the other hand, the adoration of the Eucharist.

For the Pope, this adoration has existed in the Church ‘from its very beginnings’, and on this point he refers to the rites of adoration such as genuflection and deep bowing, as well as to the Second Council of Constantinople <sup>e114</sup> and to Saint Augustine. He quotes the latter: “*Nemo autem illam carnem manducat, nisi prius adoraverit*”, and: “*Non peccare adorando, sed peccare non adorando* .115” This adoration is essential in the case of the Eucharist because, unlike the other sacraments, “this sacrament... not only brings forth grace, but also permanently contains the Author of that grace .116” He therefore exhorts the bishops not to tolerate deviant liturgists who attribute efficacy and dignity solely to liturgical rites. On the contrary, churches must remain open outside worship hours so that adoration before the tabernacle is not

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<sup>110</sup> MD 38/561.

<sup>111</sup> MD 43/566.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. MD 43/567.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. MD 36/557–560.

<sup>114</sup> MD 45/569, with note 66; DH 431.

<sup>115</sup> MD 45/569: ‘Let no one eat this flesh before worshipping it.’ ‘We do not sin by worshipping it, but ... we sin by not worshipping it.’

<sup>116</sup> MD 45/569.

.<sup>117</sup> Of course, he is well aware that, throughout the history of the Church, Eucharistic devotion has developed into ‘various forms, ... each day certainly more beautiful and beneficial, such as, for example, daily devotional visits..., the blessing..., processions..., and public adoration’ of the Blessed Sacrament, perpetual prayer and, above all, the blessing of the Blessed Sacrament. Yet he does not regard the forms known in early Christian times as the sole norms, in a narrow conception of Tradition; he highly praises all these developments .<sup>118</sup> In 1956, he emphasised once more: “To separate the tabernacle from the altar is to separate two things which, in their origin and in their nature, must remain united .119” Adoration of the Eucharist in no way threatens, as some fear, to create a “confusion” between the “historical” Christ and the triumphant Lord. On the contrary, the Church and the faithful will discover that they “are but one .”

On the contrary: to neglect adoration before the tabernacle, just as to discourage what are called ‘devotional confessions’ of sins committed <sup>s121</sup> and, consequently, to despise Marian devotion—these are ‘poisonous fruits, exceedingly harmful to Christian piety, which grow on the rotten branches of a healthy tree; these must therefore be cut off<sup>122</sup>”

“Undoubtedly,” says the Pope, “since liturgical prayer is the public prayer of the bride of Jesus Christ, it possesses a dignity superior to that of private prayers <sup>s123</sup>”; yet this should not lead one to disdain forms of extra-liturgical devotion. “That is why anyone who rashly dared to undertake the reform of these exercises of piety, in order to reduce them to liturgical ceremonies alone, would be doing something harmful and full of deception .124” He therefore recommends the full richness of such forms of devotion, whether the Month of Mary, prayers to the Sacred Heart, novenas, triduums, the Way of the Cros <sup>x125</sup> or, more specifically, the

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<sup>117</sup> Cf. MD 60/584.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. MD 45/569 ff. Citation: MD 45-46/569.

<sup>119</sup> Cf. on this point the paper presented at last year’s symposium by Dieter WEISS on the theme: ‘Eucharistic devotion in the Church after the Council of Trent’, pp. 155–156, with note 73. As early as 1957, the Congregation for Rites published a corresponding decree on the tabernacle (*ibid.*, p. 156).

<sup>120</sup> MD 46/570.

<sup>121</sup> On this subject, and recalling corresponding statements in *Mystici Corporis*, Pius XII said: ‘... some ... admit ... that the confession of sins made for the sole purpose of devotion should be discouraged ... (these) opinions... are not at all in keeping with the spirit of Christ and his immaculate spouse, but are truly harmful to the spiritual life.’ (MD 60-61/585).

<sup>122</sup> MD 60/584.

<sup>123</sup> MD 15/537.

<sup>124</sup> MD 62/587.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. MD 62/586-587.

rosary.<sup>126</sup> Nevertheless, bishops must certainly ‘instil in everyone that the Christian life is not does not lie in the multiplicity and variety of prayers and devotional practices. 127’ The Pope therefore also recognises the dangers that are emerging today in certain circles as a reaction to prevailing rationalism and religious modernism. He therefore recommends that private forms of devotion should be imbued with the spirit of the liturgy, as is particularly the case with the ‘Divine Office’ of the canonical hours. Being the “prayer of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ”, it is undoubtedly “addressed to God in the name and for the benefit of all Christians 128”, especially by priests and religious, but it is also highly recommended to the laity, particularly at Sunday Vespers .<sup>129</sup>

A characteristic of the spiritual barrenness of liturgical modernism is that, despite all the recommendations, the recitation of the reformed canonical hours has, to a large extent, been abandoned by both clergy and laity.

On the other hand, according to Pius XII, who, with Thomas Aquinas, defines ‘devotion’ as “the principal act of the virtue of religion<sup>130</sup>”, a “theocentric” life permeates all aspects—private, marital, social, economic and political—of human life and action .<sup>131</sup>

Pius XII also mentions ‘the whole human family’. But he sees only one possibility for it to ‘find peace once things have finally returned to order’: the blessing of the Blessed Sacrament, which must lead it to sing ‘with one heart and one mind the hymn of this adoration on<sup>132</sup>’

### **3.5 Forms and aids**

An important means recommended by the encyclical to support spiritual growth is liturgical formation, whether of the clergy<sup>133</sup> or of the laity<sup>134</sup>. In this sense, the Pope describes as ‘praiseworthy efforts’ and a ‘noble and fruitful emula on<sup>135</sup>’ the liturgical efforts made in this

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<sup>126</sup> Cf. MD 59–60/583–584.

<sup>127</sup> MD 62–63/587.

<sup>128</sup> MD 49/573.

<sup>129</sup> Cf. MD 51–52/575–576.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. MD 13/534–535.

<sup>131</sup> See MD 14/536.

<sup>132</sup> MD 47/571–572.

<sup>133</sup> See MD 67/591–592.

<sup>134</sup> See MD 68/587.

<sup>135</sup> MD 2–3/523.

era. However, this recognition is immediately accompanied by numerous restrictions. According to the encyclical, ‘some are too eager for novelty and stray from the paths of sound doctrine and prudence’, ‘they often introduce’ elements that

“compromise” the liturgy or “taint it with” serious errors.<sup>136</sup> Certain abuses have, in the past, served ‘to the great benefit of heretics and the propagation of their errors’, and it was such abuses that once led the Holy See to establish the Congregation for Rites.<sup>137</sup> Similarly, bishops too have a duty to watch over the liturgy.<sup>138</sup> To this end, they may resort to diocesan implementing decisions, or also call upon a liturgical council, which must, however, work within the framework of the provisions applicable to the whole Church, ‘and let it not be permitted to anyone, even a priest, to use sacred buildings to carry out experiments of any kind there.<sup>139</sup>’ It is ‘the sense of the universal’ that ‘affirms the unity of the Church.’ Thus the encyclical repeatedly enjoins obedience to the popes and to the Holy See in general.<sup>140</sup>

This does not preclude an evolution of the liturgy. Thus the hierarchy has “not hesitated—whilst safeguarding the substantial integrity of the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments—to modify what it judged not to be perfectly suitable and to add what seemed to it more appropriate<sup>141</sup>” Insofar as the liturgy comprises both human and divine elements divine, these may be modified to bring about an ‘admirable variety’ (.<sup>142</sup>). ‘The progressive growth’ highlights customs that were only ‘sketched out in earlier ages’; moreover, other ‘pious institutions’ ‘are brought back into use’ after a certain time (.<sup>143</sup>).

It is therefore not a question, for the Pope, of regarding any particular era as absolute, even that of Christian Antiquity. ‘Undoubtedly,’ he says, ‘the liturgy of antiquity is worthy of veneration; yet an ancient practice must not be regarded, solely because of its air of antiquity, as more suitable and better... as regards its effects and the conditions

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<sup>136</sup> MD 4/524.

<sup>137</sup> MD 21/543.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. MD 21–22/544–545.

<sup>139</sup> MD 38/562.

<sup>140</sup> MD 66–67/588.

<sup>141</sup> MD 19/541.

<sup>142</sup> MD 19/541–542.

<sup>143</sup> MD 20/542.

News of the Times and Things .<sup>144</sup> As examples of such archaism, he asserts that ‘it would be to stray from the right path to wish to restore the altar to its original form as a table, to wish to radically remove black from liturgical colours, to exclude holy images and statues from churches, to depict the divine Redeemer on the cross in such a way that the acute sufferings he endured do not appear... ’, and elsewhere <sup>ore</sup><sup>145</sup>; he further condemns the rejection of new liturgical rites established under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the return to earlier conciliar forms accompanied by the rejection of more recent assertions, as well as the rejection of new canonical norms in order to return to older sources .<sup>146</sup>

Does this also apply to those who defend the classical Roman rite, because they wish to ‘revive outdated rites <sup>s</sup><sup>147</sup>?’ Certainly not: they are in fact relying on a principle that Pius XII himself emphasises: the safeguarding of ‘‘substantial integrity 148’’, which the arbitrariness of the present day spares. This principle justifies, in particular, the reasons they put forward for giving preference to the Latin language, which are identical to those of the Pope. Indeed, Latin is valued not only as ‘a manifest and striking sign of unity’ but also, and above all, as ‘effective protection against any corruption of the original doctrine . 149’

In contrast to the gross errors encountered today, Pius XII could still say of many errors of his time that they were ‘‘subtle ’ p. 150’; nevertheless, he considered it ‘‘indispensabl , p. 151’ for bishops to exercise vigilance against the enemy who sows discord amongst the good seed. In addition to the errors already cited, he briefly mentions, here again, the ‘dangerous ‘humanism’ that seduces souls, as well as a ‘noxious ‘quietism’ and a ‘false ‘mysticism’’ <sup>152</sup>. Alluding to the theology of the mysteries, he criticises the authors—and in particular Odon Casel with his theory of the mystery of worship—who ‘dare

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<sup>144</sup> MD 545.

<sup>145</sup> MD 23/545.

<sup>146</sup> Cf. MD 23–24/546.

<sup>147</sup> MD 22/544.

<sup>148</sup> MD 19/541.

<sup>149</sup> MD 22/545.

<sup>150</sup> MD 69/593.

<sup>151</sup> MD *ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

“to assert that one need not concern oneself with the historical Christ, but with the ‘pneumatic and glorified Christ’.”<sup>153</sup>

On the contrary, the Pope presents the liturgical year as an opportunity to experience the mysteries

of Christ as ‘constantly present’ and effective.<sup>154</sup> To the cycle of the Year of the Lord are added the feasts of Mary and the other saints. We should imitate these saints—in their diversity—just as they imitated Christ and loved God and their neighbour; another reason to remember them is “to implore their help.<sup>155</sup>” This applies in particular to Mary, “for her life is closely linked to the mysteries of Christ .<sup>156</sup>”

Therefore, contrary to what an iconoclastic archaism asserts, pictorial representations must always have their place in churches, and the Pope includes contemporary art here, provided that it seeks to serve ‘the needs of the Christian community. “The aim is to strike the right balance between ‘the excesses of “realism” and those of “symbolism”’.”<sup>157</sup> On this point, and contrary to the autonomy granted to the artist today, the Pope assigns to bishops the responsibility “to enlighten and guide the inspiration of artists .”<sup>158</sup>

With regard to architecture, music and the other arts, the Pope’s position is also characterised by a diversity of forms and openness to new creations, but with a firm attachment to all that constitutes the essential .<sup>159</sup>

Anyone who influences or guides the position of the faithful must therefore be subject to scrutiny. This applies in particular, for example, to those who lead spiritual exercises. They must encourage the faithful to participate in worship and to practise adoration. “If, on the other hand, they were to end up creating obstacles or were found to be opposed to the principles and rules of divine worship, then they should undoubtedly be regarded as not being inspired or guided by wise counsel or enlightened zeal.<sup>160</sup>”

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<sup>153</sup> MD 55/579. An explanatory letter published by the Holy Office in 1948 specifies that this refers to those “who teach that, in liturgical worship, the mysteries are not historical but are present in a mysterious and sacramental, yet real, manner.” Quoted from DH, note 1, p.

<sup>154</sup> MD 56/580.

<sup>155</sup> MD 57-58/581-582.

<sup>156</sup> MD 58/582.

<sup>157</sup> MD 66/590.

<sup>158</sup> MD 66-67/591. Thus, the arts must regard themselves as ‘most noble servants of divine worship’ (*ibid.*).

<sup>159</sup> *Cf.* MD 65-67/588 ff.

<sup>160</sup> MD 62/586.

All this shows how much the Pope cares that the faithful be led to an “*actuosa participatio*. 161” But he gives this participation a deeper meaning than is often the case today. Of course, he too considers it inappropriate that “the people should respond only with a faint and imperceptible murmur to the communal prayers said in Latin and in the vernacular . 162”. Yet, for him, this concept of participation is set in a . Pius XII recalls Christ’s will: “He wished, however, that, in order to obtain the saving fruits produced by him on the cross, all might be led and brought to his cross, chiefly through the sacraments and through the Eucharistic sacrifice. In this present and personal participation (*actuosa singulorum participatione*)..., the members take on a greater likeness to their divine Head day by day f.163”

#### **4. The reception of the encyclical after 1947**

##### **4.1 What Pius XII did after 1947**

In the year following the publication of the encyclical, a ‘Pontifical Commission for the Reform of the Liturgy’ was established in Rome. It was tasked with translating the intentions of the encyclical into action, which was done in the following years through a series of specific measures. Dogmatically, and the Pope ensured this, the changes made were undoubtedly beyond reproach; liturgically and pastorally, they were also, to a large extent, sensible and useful. One cannot, however, overlook the fact that the proposals for change were presented in Rome by bishops sympathetic to the reforms and that they were then dealt with, in some cases, by people who either sympathised with these reforms or were impressed by the expertise of certain specialists . 164

For many sacraments, the use of the vernacular was widely authorised in numerous countries, notably France and Germany. Following a few isolated authorisations granted in 1951, preparations for the reform of Holy Week began in earnest from 1953 onwards, before being formally decreed in 1955. The Eucharistic fast was reduced in 1953. In 1955, the rubrics of the missal were simplified, for example by often giving priority to the annual cycle

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<sup>161</sup> MD p. 67. It mentions altar servers in particular. These must be chosen ‘from all social classes... even from higher social and cultural backgrounds’ and ‘be properly educated and trained’. This, it was hoped, “would foster the emergence of new vocations to the priesthood among them” (MD 68/592).

<sup>162</sup> MD 65/589, quoting Pius XI in *Divini Cultus*.

<sup>163</sup> MD 28-29/551.

<sup>164</sup> Cf. JUNGSMANN, in: *LThK* 12, p. 12

on the feasts of saints. Furthermore, concessions were granted for the celebration of Mass in the afternoon and in the evening .<sup>165</sup>

It is worth noting, however, that in the 1950s, the Pope's statements on liturgical matters were heavily marked by restrictions, calls to order and warnings. This applies in particular to the wishes expressed in favour of concelebration, which need not be discussed here since, last year, Bishop Schmitz addressed this in greater detail<sup>166</sup>; it also applies to the 1955 encyclical *Musicae sacrae disciplina*, regarding which,

For example, Jungmann laments “the retarding influences... , p. 167 ”; and this applies particularly for the addresses delivered by the Pope to the bishops on the occasion of the canonisation of Pius X in 1954.

In his capacity as *magister*, the Pope enjoins the bishops to ensure that, within the Church, teaching is not carried out in one's own name or in the name of theological science, but by virtue of the mission conferred by the Magisterium .<sup>168</sup> For him, appropriate vigilance is radically different from mistrust or unfounded suspicion, yet there are certain people who, precisely, elevate their own thoughts and the rules of non-theological sciences to the status of absolute truth. There can be no theology that is autonomous from the Magisterium .<sup>169</sup>

In his capacity as priest, the Pope reminds the bishops that the priesthood is founded on the New Covenant, ‘*cuius praecipua potestas et muneris functio est offere unicum et celsissimum sacrificium*’, which Christ ‘*cruento modo in cruce obtulit et incruento in Novissima Cena anticipavit, continenter iterari voluit*’, since he made it a commandment .<sup>170</sup> Christ did not call all Christians to the priesthood, but only the apostles, and he gave them the power

: “*Itaque sacerdos celebrans, personam Christi gerens, sacrificat, isque solus; non populus, non clerici, ne sacerdotes... qui ... inserviunt* .171” He rebukes those who continue to wish to attribute to all a “*sacrificandi potestatem*”. However much one may welcome liturgical institutes and congresses, their conclusions nonetheless remain subject to the judgement of the Magisterium. According to the CIC, it is the exclusive prerogative of the Holy See to regulate the liturgy and to approve liturgical books

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<sup>165</sup> Cf. JUNGSMANN, *op. cit.*

<sup>166</sup> Cf. *La Liturgie, Trésor de l'Église*, pp. 121 ff.

<sup>167</sup> In: *LThK* 12, p. 11. Jungmann also points out that, even before the Council, there was very strong opposition to certain innovations – for example, at liturgical congresses – from religious musicians.

<sup>168</sup> See *AAS* 1954, pp. 314–315.

<sup>169</sup> Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 316–317, where the reader is referred to *Humani Generis* and 2 Tim 4:3–4.

<sup>170</sup> *AAS* 1954, p. 667.

<sup>171</sup> *AAS* 1954, p. 668.

liturgy.<sup>172</sup>

Finally, the Pope addresses the bishops in his capacity as *a shepherd*. He knows that, in the modern age, people wish to be treated as adults and will not accept any intermediary between themselves and God. However, to guide people properly is not to impose guardianship on children, but to lead adults towards the goal of the society of which they are a part. God instituted the pastors of the Church not as a burden but for the good of souls; by steering them away from error and vice, they will lead them to true freedom, and it would therefore be contrary to wisdom and love to deny them this assistance.<sup>173</sup> For the exercise of their ministry to be fruitful, it is particularly necessary for bishops to maintain relations with one another, so that the faithful are not surprised that identical matters are subject to different regulations in neighbouring dioceses. Pius XII therefore recommends that bishops meet in provincial or plenary councils.<sup>174</sup> In his view, conformism that tends to yield to the aspirations of the spirit of the age is hardly to be feared so long as there remains a frequent and lively relationship with the Apostolic See in matters of doctrine, morals and discipline.<sup>175</sup>

The popes do not speak in their own name, but by virtue of the authority inherent in their office; they do not seek to impose uniformity and conformity in all things, but they act by divine right and in accordance with the constitution of the Church of Christ. Insofar as they remain bound to the Apostolic See, bishops receive enlightenment and certainty on contentious matters, assistance in times of difficulty, and consolation in times of distress. Furthermore, the Pope is better able to recognise more quickly the evils threatening the Church, and he is also better able to apply the necessary remedies more swiftly.<sup>176</sup>

#### **4.2 The actions of the ‘reformers’ after 1947**

In his commentary on the *Constitution on the Liturgy*, published in 1966, Jungmann asserts that, in the encyclical *Mediator Dei*, ‘Pius XII definitively spoke out in favour of liturgical renewal.<sup>177</sup>’ Yet, as we have seen, the text of the encyclical in no way allows us to speak of ‘reform’ in the sense in which the term was later applied. In fact, as

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<sup>172</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 668 ff.

<sup>173</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 668 ff.

<sup>174</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 675–676.

<sup>175</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 676.

<sup>176</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 676.

<sup>177</sup> In: *LThK* 12, p. 11.

As Abbé Martimort quite rightly writes, in my view, regarding Lambert Beauduin: ‘The warnings of the encyclical did not deter *him* .178’

Be that as it may, after 1947, the structures and international contacts of the reform advocates were strengthened. The very year following the publication of the encyclical, the Liturgical Institute of Trier was founded; in 1956, in France, the Higher Institute of Liturgy in Paris was added to the CPL. Liturgical congresses, attended by representatives from several countries, were organised in various countries, including the ‘Liturgical Study Weeks’ in Luxembourg. Other countries, not bordering the Rhine, followed suit: for instance, the United States and Italy<sup>e179</sup>, up to the 1956 Assisi Congress on Liturgical Pastoral Care, “the organisation of which was encouraged by the Congregation for Rites s180” and to which Pope Pius XII addressed a special address, in particular, to the theme of concelebration on.<sup>181</sup> Jungmann notes with satisfaction the participation of numerous bishops from various countries: for him, this indicates “the extent to which the movement has spread throughout the world , p. 182”. No less than four years later, these contacts were to take on decisive importance during the preparatory phase of the Council , p. 183

Regarding Assisi, Jungmann emphasises “the pastoral dimension on which the efforts at renewal are based u-184” It is thus clear that, for many, liturgical reform was regarded more as a tool of pastoral care. As we have already noted, this can be seen as a step towards an anthropocentric shift.

As regards the reception of the encyclical and the themes put forward by the ‘reformers’, we shall cite as an example a study published in 1960 by Emil Joseph Lengeling.<sup>185</sup> It can be found in the book: *Unser Gottesdienst*, which bears the subtitle: ‘Reflections and Suggestions – Working document published under the direction of Alfons Kirchgässner on behalf of the Liturgical Commission of German-speaking Countries .186’ In this sense, one can

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<sup>178</sup> “Our Father Dom Lambert Beauduin”, A.G. MARTIMORT in *Les Questions liturgiques et paroissiales*, September 1959.

<sup>179</sup> “The Liturgical Movement in Italy”, Rinaldo FALSINI, *La Maison-Dieu* no. 74, 1963 and “The Liturgical Movement in the United States”, Jean DANIELOU, *La Maison-Dieu* no. 25, 1951.

<sup>180</sup> JUNGSMANN, in: *LThK* 12, p. 11.

<sup>181</sup> Cf. the presentation by Bishop Schmitz, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

<sup>182</sup> In: *LThK* 12, p. 11.

<sup>183</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 10 ff.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>185</sup> For further information on this author, see the paper by Prof. Wolfgang WALDSTEIN at last year’s symposium, entitled: ‘The Liturgical Movement of Dom Guéranger on the Eve of the First Vatican Council’, in: *La Liturgie – Trésor de l’Église*, p. 177.

<sup>186</sup> Freiburg im Breisgau, 1960.

This work may be regarded as a counterpart to Nagel's book on the reform of the Mass .<sup>187</sup> This study appeared after the death of Pius XII, at a time when his successor had already announced the convocation of a council and indicated that he wished to base his pontificate less on condemnations than on the affection of the heart.

Lengeling's study is entitled: *Überwundenes in der Meßerklärung* and is, apparently, a critique of *the Unitarian Catechism* used in Germany between 1925 and 1955, replaced in 1955 by a *New Catechism* .<sup>188</sup> Thus, Lengeling criticises a work that has been superseded by the bishops and, in this context, he is able to say many things which, in another context, would be shocking or would not have been without consequences.

In 1960, Lengeling was unable to criticise the encyclical *\*Mediator Dei\**; yet many of the criticisms he directs at the old catechism could just as easily, from Lengeling's perspective, be applied to *\*Mediator Dei\**. He says, for example: 'Anyone who departs from (universal) Catholic revelation, is not only one who denies a revealed truth but also one who neglects aspects that are certainly attested in Holy Scripture and developed in Tradition, and who confines himself to solemn definitions of the faith which, in defence against heretical doctrines, emphasise isolated elements without claiming to describe the whole .<sup>189</sup>

Thus Lengeling criticises the old catechism for being almost exclusively centred on the Eucharistic presence of Christ and for scarcely mentioning other 'modes—themselves "real"—of Christ's presence'. To justify his position, Lengeling quotes *Mediator Dei*, but in a remarkable way: "There is not a word about the presence of Christ—yet this is important for fully understanding divine worship in every liturgical action... in the holy sacrifice of the altar ... in the person of his minister..., in the sacraments..., in the praises and prayers addressed to God, according to the words of Christ: 'Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them' (Mt 18:20).<sup>190</sup>

We see, then, that here Lengeling refrains from mentioning the presence '*sub Eucharisticis speciebus*', which Pius XII nevertheless emphasises with a '*tum maxime*'—and this may possibly be understood by taking into account the context in which Lengeling writes—but, moreover, he omits

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<sup>187</sup> As we have noted, he is credited with publishing Romano Guardini's letter to Bishop Stohr in 1940 (*ibid.*, pp. 3 ff.).

<sup>188</sup> This text was in fact not to survive for long, despite the tactical praise heaped upon it by Lengeling. It was no longer used after the Council, although it still forms, for example, the basis of the catechesis of the St Peter's Fraternity community established in Salzburg.

<sup>189</sup> LENGELING, in: *Überwundenes in der Meßerklärung*, pp. 24–25.

<sup>190</sup> LENGELING, *op. cit.*, p. 25, citing MD 8/528. The ellipsis is Lengeling's.

the quotation regarding the sacraments: *'praesens adest in sacramentis'* without mentioning the specifically Catholic *'virtute sua'* that immediately follows; and, regarding the presence, he quotes *'in Deo admotis laudibus'* whilst omitting the *'denique'* that clarifies it .<sup>191</sup>

“One would search in vain,” continues Lengeling, “for anything else on the presence of Christ in the word of Scripture.” On this point, Lengeling cannot cite *Mediator Dei* as this point is also “absent” from it. On the other hand, it will be mentioned in the *Constitution on the Liturgy* and, as Jungmann points out, presented “in an ecumenical spirit . 192”

It would no doubt be of interest to analyse Lengeling’s other criticisms, presented under the headings: ‘Isolated truths . p. 193’ and ‘Expressions and turns of phrase that call for reservation . p. 194’, because they anticipate certain directions of the ‘reform’; however, I shall content myself with pointing out what Lengeling still deems worth quoting regarding *Mediator Dei*: “The truth that Christ’s sacrifice is offered not only for the whole Church but also by her”; and, further on: “the participation of the faithful in the sacrifice insofar as they share in the holy priesthood”, or again: “the right and duty of active participation, including communion.”

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<sup>191</sup> Cf. MD 8/528 and *Lengeling*, op. cit., p. 25, as well as the present exposition.

<sup>192</sup> See SC 7 and JUNGSMANN’s commentary in *LThK* 12, p. 21. Lengeling adds: “The presence of Christ’s saving actions in the liturgical year, which, according to *Mediator Dei*, ‘is Christ himself who persists in his Church’” (LENGELING, *ibid.*, p. 25, quoting MD 56/580). However, the expression ‘the liturgical year which, according to *Mediator Dei*, is Christ himself’ is consistent neither with the Latin text nor with the Pope’s thinking. The Pope states more precisely that the liturgical year is not ‘a mere and simple reminder of things from a bygone era’. He then begins a new sentence: “*Sed potius est Christus ipse, qui in sua Ecclesia perseverat.*” It is erroneous to seek to infer from this a particular ‘real’ presence of Christ in the liturgical year that could be placed on the same level as, for example, the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. What the Pope wishes to evoke here, as so often in his encyclical, is the presence of the Head in his mystical Body, the Church. In Lengeling, there is no explicit reference to this biblical doctrine, though it is essential. On the other hand, in his encyclical, Pius XII repeatedly and clearly emphasises that it is the one and the same Christ who triumphs in heaven, who is present in the sacrament of the altar, and who is the Head of his mystical Body, the Church (cf. MD 46/570). To wish to add anything to this is to fall under the condemnation pronounced by the Pope of all ‘uncertain, rather obscure and difficult to understand matters of which certain recent writers speak’ (MD 56/580).

<sup>193</sup> In particular, with regard to the Mass, one finds transubstantiation ‘which is almost the sole subject of discussion’, Communion with its ‘sentimental blackmail’, ‘asceticism’ and ‘isolated acts that can scarcely be performed’, the names of the principal parts of the Mass, as well as the term ‘preparation’ applied to the celebration of the Word, etc. (*ibid.*, p. 29).

<sup>194</sup> We may cite in particular the concept of the ‘renewal’ of the sacrifice of the Cross, and, regarding Communion, the manner of speaking ‘formerly almost exclusively personal (Christ, the Saviour, God received)’ instead of speaking of ‘gifts’ or ‘offerings’. The concepts of ‘transubstantiation’, ‘priestly power’, ‘Christ’s descent upon the altar’, and many others are, for Lengeling, questionable; of course, he also cites certain formulations rightly rejected as excessive (*ibid.*, pp. 32 ff.). He even goes so far as to criticise the *New Catechism* because of its statement on the Mass (cf. *ibid.*, p. 28). “It nevertheless offers a good starting point – pending something better – for a comprehensive understanding of the Eucharist” (*ibid.*, p. 28). For Lengeling, the Mass does not ‘involve’, amongst other things, ‘a proclamation full of realities’, ‘a communal meal for the faithful’, etc., but it ‘is’ all of these things (*ibid.*, p. 27).

### 4.3 The Encyclical in the Council Texts

In 1960, the *Commissio praeparatoria* responsible for dealing with the liturgy at the Council did not yet include any French or German bishops; but these were soon appointed, and with them the liturgists Martimort, from Paris, and Johannes Wagner, from Trier .<sup>195</sup> In his foreword to commentary on Jungmann's *Constitution on the Liturgy*, Wagner confirms: 'During the preparation and the discussions of the schema... there was in Rome a circle of experts from the German-speaking world, members of liturgical commissions and institutes from Germany, Austria and Switzerland who, through their close connections, were privy to every stage of the development of this constitution.'<sup>196</sup> It was Jungmann, the 'eldest' of this circle, who authored the commentary found in the *Lexicon für Theologie und Kirche* and who, alongside the more widely circulated commentary by Rahner and Vorgrimmler in their *Kleines Konzilkompendium* 197, shaped the image of the *conciliar Constitution* in German-speaking countries. However, Jungmann's text is much longer—and thus covers a broader range of material—but is also generally more objective than that of Rahner and Vorgrimmler, which contains virulent polemical elements .<sup>198</sup>

These commentaries also contain numerous references to *Mediator Dei*, to which the *Constitution on the Liturgy* refers several times.

However, unlike the procedure followed for other conciliar documents, the encyclical is not mentioned in the official notes. It is therefore impossible to draw up a complete list of quotations and allusions to *Mediator Dei* in the *conciliar Constitution*, as many phrases in the conciliar text draw upon it in a very broad sense that cannot always be found in *Mediator Dei*. What is clearly taken from *Mediator Dei* are the modes of Christ's presence in the Holy Mass, which I have already discussed in relation to Lengeling; that said, as we have seen, not only was a reference to his presence in the word of Scripture added 'in an ecumenical spirit', but also, in the

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<sup>195</sup> Cf. MAY: *Die alte und die neue Messe*, pp. 5 ff.; references to works can be found, in particular, in note 8 on p. 5.

<sup>196</sup> WAGNER in *LThK* 12, p. 10. In *\*Die alte und neue Messe\**, MAY also refers (p. 27) to 'the decisive influence, during the work of the Fathers, of the Jesuit Father Jungmann and the Swiss theologian Küng in line with the objectives of the reformist faction of the Council'. Regarding the role of Karl Rahner, see his revealing correspondence from the time of the Council in: *Karl Rahner verstehen. Eine Einführung in sein Leben und Denken*, by Herbert VORGRIMMLER (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1985), pp. 171 ff. On the discussions regarding the liturgy at the Council, see also Ralph WILTGEN: *Der Rhein fließt in den Tiber* (1988, Feldkirch), pp. 16 ff., 67 ff. and 141 ff. [*The Rhine flows into the Tiber*, Ed. du Cèdre, 1975].

197 Karl RAHNER / Hubert VORGRIMMLER: *Kleines Konzilkompendium*, Freiburg im Breisgau 1966.

<sup>198</sup> They accuse, for example, those who prefer the old liturgy of 'an inability to communicate', 'cultural arrogance' and 'a sterile attitude towards history'. They are "tragicomic secondary figures of the Church, failures of history" (*ibid.*, p. 40).

In the same spirit—that is to say, more precisely, to take account of Protestant positions—the description “instruments of salvation”, added by Pius XII, was not retained in relation to the sacraments. It was in vain that, in the council hall, some asked right up to the final vote “that we adhere more closely to the Pope’s text”. The resistance stemmed “above all from the concern that faith in the Eucharistic presence might be diminished .<sup>199</sup>”

As this example demonstrates, and apart from certain unanimous references made to it by the Council

— for there were some, of course —, references to *Mediator Dei* and Pius XII can therefore be grouped into two main categories. Either they were paradigms of the ‘reformist’ majority presented in the words of Pius XII: they were then well established and beyond the criticism of the ‘conservative’ minority. Or, when precisely this minority expressed strong reservations regarding new formulations, formulations from Pius XII were adopted, after sometimes heated discussions, which reassured and put the situation into perspective.

It is to this latter category that the passage from *Sacrosanctum Concilium* belongs, for example, which recalls that “the Mass always retains ... its public and social nature<sup>e</sup> 200” and which was added because certain Council Fathers feared “that by insisting on the communal character of the Mass, one might come to reject the private Mass . 201”

When the *Constitution on the Liturgy* expressly praises the Divine Office, the least one can say is that this does not align with the ideas of Jungmann, the commentator. He is, in fact, in favour of the possibilities provided for in the text to reduce the recita<sup>on</sup> 202, and therefore speaks negatively of the “panegyric phrases drawn from *Mediator Dei*” in praise of this office.<sup>203</sup>

We can therefore see that, as the example of the different forms of Christ’s presence has already shown, the quotations from *Mediator Dei* are accompanied by omissions or additions that alter their meaning. Thus, the reference to vernacular languages, which was very well received by the majority of the council, states in the original text of *Mediator Dei*: ‘*In non paucis tamen ritibus vulgati sermonis usurpatio valde utilis apud populum existere potest, nihilominus..* .204’ and this sentence is immediately followed, amongst other things, by a restrictive reminder regarding the authority of the Holy See. In the conciliar text, the

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<sup>199</sup> JUNGSMANN in: *LThK* 12, p. 21.

<sup>200</sup> Cf. SC 27 and MD 34/557.

<sup>201</sup> JUNGSMANN in: *LThK* 12, p. 36.

<sup>202</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>204</sup> ‘In many rites, however, the use of the vernacular can be of great benefit to the people; but...’ MD 22/545.

the scope of application is considerably broadened and the content is presented in the affirmative:

“*Cum tamen, sive in missa, sive in sacramentorum administratione, sive in aliis liturgiae partibus, haud raro linguae vernaculae usurpatio valde utilis apud populum existere possit, amplior locus ipsi tribui valeat, imprimis... 205*”

Regarding the participation of the faithful in the sacrifice, *Mediator Dei* is cited with a characteristic omission. In *Mediator Dei*, Pius XII states: “*Christifideles suo modo duplicique ratione participant: quia nempe non tantum per sacerdotis manus, sed etiam uno cum ipso quodammodo sacrificium offerunt.*”<sup>206</sup> In the *Constitution on the Liturgy*, we read that the faithful should ‘*non tantum per sacerdotis manus sed etiam una cum ipso offerentes, seipsos offerre discant...*’ The qualification provided by the ‘*quodammodo*’ — ‘in their own way’ — has disappeared from the citation.<sup>207</sup>

Of course, the ‘reformers’ welcomed the fact that, like Benedict XIV, Pius XII praises ‘the piety of those who, not only do they wish to be nourished by the heavenly bread when they attend the sacrifice, but also wish to receive the hosts consecrated in that very sacrifice .208’

The *Constitution on the Liturgy* states: “This perfect participation in the Mass is strongly recommended, which consists in the faithful, after the priest’s communion, receiving the Body of the Lord in the same sacrifice... 209” However, in Pius XII’s work, there is no mention of a “*perfectior participatio*”; he in fact emphasises that by receiving previously consecrated hosts, one also participates, truly and really, in the sacrifice.

On this point, even Rahner and Vorgrimmler refer to the encyclical, noting that “this is a wish of the encyclical *Mediator Dei*, reiterated with emphasis, and which, ecumenically, is also of great importance .210” They therefore misinterpret these statements of the encyclical as a link to the Protestant conception of the presence of Christ, albeit limited in time .211

In his commentary, Jungmann endeavours to demonstrate that important milestones had

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205 “However, whether in the Mass, in the administration of the sacraments, or in other parts of the liturgy, the use of the vernacular can often be very useful for the people: it may therefore be granted a greater place, especially...” (SC 36 § 2).

<sup>206</sup> MD 33/555–556.

<sup>207</sup> SC 48. Here again, the quotation of the ‘*sed etiam*’ served to silence the reservations of certain Fathers who wished to speak only of a presentation of the offerings ‘by’ the priest (JUNGSMANN, *op. cit.*, p. 52 and note 8).

<sup>208</sup> MD 40–41/564 ff.

<sup>209</sup> SC 55.

<sup>210</sup> RAHNER/VORGRIMMLER, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>211</sup> In line with the above, they express understanding for the fact that the Council, ‘wishing to ensure a smooth transition [*to where? W.G.*] was unable to address other outstanding issues – for example, giving the celebration of the Eucharist the form of a genuine meal, without completely abandoning its stylised representation but also without exaggerating the sacred and the artistic” (*ibid.*, p. 44).

had already been raised under Pius XII, in the years following the publication of *\*Mediator Dei\**. Regarding the participation of the faithful <sup>s212</sup>, he notes, for example: ‘After centuries of a purely clerical liturgy, the participation of the people was not expressly envisaged again in a liturgical text until *the Ordo sabbati sancti* of 1951.<sup>213</sup>’ Regarding the ‘rejection of any attempt at Europeanisation’, p. 214”, he refers to certain passages from the encyclical *Summi Pontificatus* by Pius X II.<sup>215</sup> Regarding concelebration <sup>216</sup>, he may be referring to the declaration of the Holy Office of May 1957<sup>217</sup>, but he adds: “Even before the Council, it was self-evident that it was not a matter—as was normally the case for priestly ordination—of everyone reciting the various prayers on their knees, before the Offertory, together with the principal celebrant .<sup>218</sup>

Where he deems it appropriate, Jungmann points out a contradiction between Pius XII and his congregations. Regarding Article 128 of SC, he notes that the development leading to the sacramental altar reached its culmination in the decree of the Congregation of Rites of 1 June 1957, whereas, as late as 1956, Pius XII had advocated various solutions. Thus, the 1964 Instruction “restored the previous freedom .<sup>219</sup>

Of course, Jungmann does not fail to mention the praise addressed by the Pope to the 1956 liturgical congress in Assisi, which is quoted in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 43. But what was unknown at the time was that many participants at that congress already had the reform of *the Ordo missae* in mind. Jungmann himself acknowledges this when he comes to discuss Article 50 of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: ‘It may be said that, among the provisions of the reform, this is the most important article in the entire constitution. *The Ordo Missae* constitutes the entire immutable structure of the Mass. It goes without saying that the preparatory commission had very precise ideas regarding the reform towards which it was necessary to strive. During the decade preceding the Council, the majority of the study meetings I mentioned earlier focused specifically on the reform of *the Ordo Missae*.’<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> SC 31.

<sup>213</sup> JUNGSMANN, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

<sup>214</sup> JUNGSMANN, *ibid.*, p. 43, regarding SC 37.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43 and note 31.

<sup>216</sup> SC 57–58.

<sup>217</sup> JUNGSMANN: *ibid.*, p. 60 and note 22.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>219</sup> JUNGSMANN: *ibid.*, pp. 104 ff.; quotation on p. 106.

<sup>220</sup> JUNGSMANN: *ibid.*, p. 53.

Finally, contrary to what Jungma <sup>nn221</sup> suggests, there is no continuity between the diocesan liturgical commissions referred to in Article 45 of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and those mentioned in *Mediator Dei*. The Council expressly states that the purpose of these commissions is to foster the liturgical movement as a movement of reform, whereas, for Pius XII, the purpose of such commissions is to ‘promote the liturgical apostolate... so that through your watchful care [*that is, that of the bishops*] everything may be carried out diligently in accordance with the prescriptions of the Apostolic See .<sup>222</sup>’ One may therefore consider that their respective aims are opposed. As we have said, in other documents of the Council, references to *Mediator Dei* are found in the official notes to the Council texts. The criteria according to which the encyclical was cited should be the same as in the case of the *Constitution on the Liturgy*. *Lumen gentium* frequently cites *Mediator Dei*: when, in LG 10, it discusses the ‘common priesthood of the faithful’ and the ‘ministry of service’<sup>e223</sup> or, in the following article, regarding the presentation of offerings by the faithful<sup>e224</sup> — two themes, therefore, which play an important role in the *Constitution on the Liturgy*<sup>e225</sup>

Conversely, in other conciliar texts where the subject matter would permit it, *Mediator Dei* is cited only in passing<sup>226</sup> or is not even cited explicitly<sup>nt227</sup>.

## 5. A final word on the role of the encyclical in the post-conciliar Church

It is well known that liturgists do not hold a unanimous view of the *conciliar Constitution on the liturgy*. Thus, regarding its adoption, Lengeling speaks of a great day because a ‘bountiful harvest has been reaped, which has ripened, under the breath of the Holy Spirit, over the course of the last few decades s228’; Vagaggini speaks of a “great step forward in the difficult reconquest of Christian essentials · n. 229”; Jungmann remarks: “On many issues, it was necessary

<sup>221</sup> “Already Pius XII, in *Mediator Dei*, had called for the establishment of liturgical commissions in the various dioceses, as provided for in Article 45” (JUNGSMANN: *ibid.*, p. 48 and note 37).

<sup>222</sup> Cf. SC 45 and MD 38/562.

<sup>223</sup> Cf. LG 10 with its reference to MD 555.

<sup>224</sup> Cf. LG 11 with its reference to MD 552 ff.

<sup>225</sup> But also for the description of the priestly ministry, in LG 28, notes 103 (MD 553) and 105 (MD 1.c, paragraph 67.)

<sup>226</sup> The decree on bishops (Art. 9, note 9) refers to MD 521 ff.; in the decree on the formation of priests (*Optatam totius*), Art. 8, note 15, refers to MD 547 ff. and 572–573.

<sup>227</sup> There is nothing, for example, in the decrees on priests (*Presbyterorum ordinis*), on ecumenism, on the Eastern Churches, nor in *Gaudium et spes*.

<sup>228</sup> Quoted in *LThK* 12, p. 13.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*

“to find a middle ground between the ideal and tradition, a line that depended on the balance of rival forces at any given moment and which is not always straight in the text of the constitution itself”, for example regarding the vernacular or the two related concepts of sacrifice and sacrament .<sup>230</sup> Rahner and Vorgrimmler note: “Now that post-conciliar liturgical work has made decisive progress, it is today [*in 1966 – W.G.*] easy to demonstrate that the demand for a mysterious sacred language is absurd and that such a language is a museum piece, contrary to the communicative essence of language. We should therefore not forget the merit of this article [*SC 36*]. Undoubtedly, the language issues have not yet been resolved, for the mere translation of the liturgical text, stiffened by the centuries, has so far only created new difficulties .<sup>231</sup>”

One could easily continue the list of similar quotations. They demonstrate that, for certain liturgists or theologians, even the terms of the Council have no authority of their own but that, to borrow an expression from Rahner, they are merely ‘the beginning of a beginning’. How could they not regard the encyclical *Mediator Dei*—and, to a large extent, the dogmatics underpinning it—as a thing of the past, of little interest now save as a historical curiosity .<sup>232</sup> Those who rely on them and endorse them must expect, at the very least, to be labelled

‘pre-conciliar’, which, as Cardinal Ratzinger explained in his famous address to the Chilean bishops in <sup>1988</sup>,<sup>233</sup> must already be regarded as a profound error.

It would no doubt be useful to conduct a study on the presence of the encyclical in the post-conciliar documents of the papal magisterium, reviewing in particular Paul VI’s encyclical *Mysterium fidei* (1965)<sup>234</sup>, the declaration of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Sacerdotium ministeriale* ( , <sup>1983</sup>)<sup>235</sup>, or the Holy Father’s Holy Thursday letters addressed to priests.

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<sup>230</sup> JUNGSMANN: *LThK* 12, p. 13.

<sup>231</sup> RAHNER/VORGLIMMER, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

<sup>232</sup> NAGEL even uses the expression: “liturgical archaeologism” (*op. cit.*, p. 41); cf. also the note “historicising”, *ibid.*, p. 41, note 7. The same line of thought is found in the works published under the title *Dialog der Kirchen* by Karl LEHMANN and Protestant authors. The volume entitled: *Lehrverurteilungen – kirchentrennend?* I, mentions the praise that *Mediator Dei* bestows, as we have seen previously, on those who wish to receive communion with consecrated hosts during the same Mass (*ibid.*, p. 110, note 52). Volume III of the series: *Das Opfer Jesu Christi und seine Gegenwart in der Kirche*, published under the editorship of Karl LEHMANN and Edmund SCHLINK (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1983), mentions in its conclusion “two important ‘milestones’ of current thinking”, namely *Mystici Corporis* (and, in this context and incidentally, *Mediator Dei*) as well as, curiously, Odon CASEL’s *Theology of the Presence of the Mysteries*, of which *Mediator Dei* speaks negatively (*ibid.*, p. 230).

<sup>233</sup> Reproduced in large part in the journal *Der Fels*, 12/1988, pp. 343–344.

<sup>234</sup> Cf. e.g. DH 4410 ff.

<sup>235</sup> See DH 4720 ff.

Be that as it may, one may regret the lack of references to the encyclical in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Undoubtedly, this remarkable work draws heavily on the spirit of the encyclical. Yet the latter is cited explicitly only once, in connection with the priesthood:

“It is the same Priest, Jesus Christ, whose role the minister truly fulfils. For, in truth, the minister is made like the High Priest by virtue of the priestly consecration he has received, and he acts by the power of Christ Himself whom he represents (*virtute ac persona ipsius Christi*).<sup>236</sup> » On the other hand, there is no direct reference to *Mediator Dei* regarding the sacrifice of the Mass and the liturgy, but it must be said that these sections are not among the points particularly developed in a work which, for the rest, we can only welcome.

As for the presence of the encyclical *Mediator Dei* in the statements of the episcopal magisterium, one cannot, unfortunately, but be even more disappointed. But fortunately, as this symposium shows, signs of a reversal of this trend have recently begun to appear. I shall therefore conclude by expressing a hope—the very same hope that, to use the words of the liturgy, Pius XII expressed in 1954.<sup>237</sup> : “*neither should the shepherd lack the obedience of the flock, nor the flock the care pastoris.*”

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<sup>236</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1548 – the reference does not specify the page (MD 26/548).

<sup>237</sup> In his address to the bishops, cf. *AAS* 1954, p. 677 – the text is that of the <sup>second</sup> post-communion prayer of the Pontifical Mass: *Si diligis*.