Drawing on the riches of Latin rites and customs

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To bring this symposium to a close, I would like to offer a few concluding reflections which will take a more practical perspective than the remarkable scholarly contributions we have heard. I should also like to make it clear that these reflections are in no way intended to exploit the contributions in question, but simply to suggest a few avenues for the liturgical reconstruction that will be necessary in the years to come. I am approaching this from the perspective of *the usus antiquior* of the Roman Rite.

The Tridentine Rite in Limbo

Let us recall that the Council of Trent and the editions of liturgical books that followed the Council established decisive Roman authority over the liturgy, which made it possible to bring the entire Latin world—already highly Romanised—into closer alignment with the books and practices of the Papal Chapel. This proved highly beneficial in many respects during the era of the Protestant Reformation, and subsequently during the Age of Enlightenment, bearing in mind that a multitude of local customs nevertheless persisted—notably in cathedrals—to counterbalance this centralism: it was a sort of 'Romanity' expressed in many voices.

We also know that, following the Revolution, the disappearance and subsequent re-establishment of cathedral chapters led to an intensification of the ultramontane centralising trend. By the early 20th century, Tridentine authority over the liturgy had reached a sort of zenith, enabling the very substantial reforms of Pius X to the Breviary and of Pius XII to Holy Week. And it was also in the name of this Tridentine Roman authority—which one might call absolute—that Paul VI was able to abolish the Tridentine liturgy.

A paradox, to which a second, even more astonishing one was the response: the Tridentine liturgy continued… in defiance of Roman authority. A widespread movement of non-acceptance of the new liturgy had in fact developed even before the end of Vatican II. Without going into the history of it here, it is worth recalling the important role soon played by Archbishop Lefebvre, who decided in 1975 to follow the 1962 Missal and the 1961 Breviary, for practical reasons and for the sake of consistency (the state of the Tridentine liturgy prior to the Council). It was on this position that Cardinal Ratzinger, later Pope Benedict XVI, subsequently based his stance in the 1984 letter **Quattuor abhinc annos**, and the *motu proprio* **Ecclesia Dei** of 1988 and **Summorum Pontificum** of 2007.

[1] Lecture delivered at the 11th CIEL symposium in Rome, in February 2020.

Admittedly, these typical editions of 1961–1962 were not without their flaws, but they had the advantage of having been conceived as useful and even providential landmarks, a last stand by the liturgists of the Congregation of Rites. A sort of '1961–62 vulgate' thus became established, a convenient reference standard, which did not prevent differences in 'additions' (a number of celebrants using rubrics dating from before 1962 and 1955) and in 'omissions' (those using the 1965 rubrics).

All this has taken place within a remarkable system of self-governance that has functioned for 50 years, as the Congregation for Divine Worship exercises no regulatory authority over *the usus antiquior* (nor, indeed, over *the usus recentior*!). As for the former Ecclesia Dei Commission, it never sought to do more than provide guidance regarding **Summorum Pontificum** and its implementing instruction **Universæ Ecclesiæ**.

The clock stopped before the Council

Furthermore, Article 9 of **Summorum Pontificum** and Articles 24 and 28 *of *Universæ Ecclesiæ** legitimised what the 'rebellion' had informally established. The final version of the Tridentine Missal determines the final versions of the other books: the standard editions of reference are those in use prior to the conciliar reform (the 1961 Breviary, the 1952 Ritual, the 1886 Ceremonial of Bishops, the 1961 and 1962 Pontificals, and, should the need ever arise with the restoration of the papal chapels, the Ceremonial of Leo X…)

But this 'stopping of the clocks' is not merely a reaction against the 'aggiornamented' liturgy, if you'll pardon the neologism. It is also a recognition that the organic vitality once experienced by the liturgy has long since become impossible.

Since the Revolution, a cultural rift has become evident between the Church and the modern world, particularly in the realm of the liturgy, which is by its very nature traditional. The response of Catholics to this situation has taken two directions:

- Either by accepting and even emphasising the opposition between the modern secular and the sacred as one of the key means of resisting the spirit of the new society. This is evident, at least implicitly, in the work of Solesmes and in the thought of Saint Pius X.
- Or by attempting to blur the distinction, particularly in style, but also through ritual modifications designed *to bring* the liturgy *up to date*.

This second approach was adopted as early as the 1930s, but particularly after the Second World War, by the complex Liturgical Movement, at the same time as the idea that the liturgy had always undergone reforms was becoming widely accepted. This was mistaken, insofar as the variations and modifications of the past had never carried this ideological burden of 'rational adaptation' inherited from the Catholic Enlightenment.

Traditional organic growth

Nevertheless, this tradition, as preserved today amidst a culture that is largely alien to it, yet within which it bears witness to what might be called a Catholic counter-culture, is perfectly capable of experiencing organic life and growth.

An organic life to be situated within a relationship to tradition – a relationship which I would describe as *modern* in relation to tradition, intelligently modern. Today, for example in the fields of music or architecture, it is no longer the relationship – which certainly had some very positive aspects – of imitation in the form of nineteenth-century pastiche. We are in an age in which historical scholarship has made considerable progress in all fields, and in which, when we so choose, we can be artistically very respectful of the past we are unearthing (unlike the contemporary 'archaeologism' of the Liturgical Movement).

Given the progress made in the historical and artistic sciences relating to choral music, a kind of eclectic traditionalism has now become possible. It would therefore be excellent to revive a whole treasure trove of traditional musical pieces, practices and repertoires from cathedrals and abbeys, which have been neglected due to the half-hearted manner in which the Tridentine Romanisation was carried out, where no effort was made to defend the two-century-old traditions that ought to have survived.

We have heard today about the riches of the Mozarabic rite and those of the Sarum rite. These may well have opportunities to exist independently, but, moreover, Roman celebrations could also boldly revive this or that piece from other Latin rites that could be integrated into them. For instance, the Hungarian musician Laszlo Dobszay, who died in 2011, worked with the *Capitulum Laicorum Sancti Michaelis Archangeli* (CLSMA) to recover forgotten treasures of the Hungarian Latin liturgy.

We must, of course, mention the enthusiastic work of Marcel Pérès with his ensemble Organum, and that of many others, such as the Gilles Binchois ensemble. The repertoires they are reviving – the pieces from the Old Roman tradition that Marcel Pérès spoke to us about and which we are going to

To give a few examples, the 12th-century Cistercian chants or those of the 13th-century School of Notre-Dame could easily be performed in a strictly liturgical setting. We might also mention the interesting reconstructions of plainchant performance similar to that which took place in the churches of France until the early 20 th century[2], or the interpretation, in the same vein, of plainchant masses from the Ancien Régime, such as the Masses of Du Mont, the Masses of Nivers and the Masses of La Feillée.

It is also within this framework that one might envisage, in certain places, the cautious and non-controversial revival of Holy Week as it was before the reforms of 51–55 (parishes in France differ from those in Italy and English-speaking countries; seminaries and communities are diverse and, in any case, distinct from parish communities).

It seems to me that it is within a very traditional revival of this kind that the creation of feasts for new saints—and thus the corresponding Masses and services—will one day emerge, when the time is ripe. One cannot envisage an ecclesial reconstruction—which will, to a significant extent, be a liturgical reconstruction—without giving prominence to a range of traditionally innovative initiatives.

2. I would like to pay tribute here to the memory of Xavier Bisaro, a leading historian of French plainchant from the Ancien Régime and professor of musicology at the François Rabelais University in Tours, who put his research into practice every Sunday at the abbey church of Notre-Dame de la Roë, before passing away suddenly in 2018.