



Secretariat for the Liturgy

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August 18, 2007

Dear Brother Bishop:

Thank you for your response to my recent request for questions and comments on the recent Apostolic Letter of Pope Benedict XVI, *Summorum Pontificum*. The Committee on the Liturgy discussed this matter at some length in the course of its meeting in Washington D.C. on August 13th.

I am pleased to enclose a revised and expanded edition of the Twenty Questions and Answers on this matter which appeared in the most recent issue of the BCL Newsletter, now entitled Forty Questions on *Summorum Pontificum*. Most of the questions which we received are addressed by this document.

I also enclose a copy of my recent letter to Bishop William Skylstad, USCCB President, along with five dubia which the Committee has requested be submitted in the name of the Conference to the relevant dicasteries of the Holy See.

Please know that the Committee on the Liturgy and its Secretariat will continue to pursue this important pastoral matter and will keep you informed as additional clarifications become available.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Donald Trautman
Bishop of Erie
Chairman

Forty Questions on the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum*

1. What is the purpose of Pope Benedict XVI's *Apostolic Letter, Summorum Pontificum*?

By this Apostolic Letter, promulgated *motu proprio*, the Holy Father seeks an “interior reconciliation in the heart of the Church”¹ with those who have demonstrated an attachment to preconciliar liturgical forms, making “it possible for all those who truly desire unity to remain in that unity or to attain it anew.” Thus does he exhort the whole Church to “generously open our hearts and make room for everything that the faith itself allows.”²

2. How does the Apostolic Letter describe the preconciliar edition of the *Missale Romanum*?

The Holy Father begins by defining two forms of the rule of prayer (*Lex orandi*) of the Latin church of Roman Rite: an ordinary form, as contained in the *Missale Romanum* of Pope Paul VI,³ and an extraordinary form, as contained in the *Missale Romanum* of Pope Saint Pius V.⁴ He notes that the extraordinary form was never abrogated and the two forms make up the Liturgy of the one Roman Rite.⁵

3. When may a Priest celebrate the *extraordinary form* in a Mass without the people?

Any Priest of the Latin Church may, without any further permission from the Holy See or his Ordinary, celebrate the extraordinary form of the *Missale Romanum* in a Mass without the people at any time except during the Sacred Triduum.⁶ If members of the faithful wish to join in these celebrations, they are permitted to do so.⁷

ON PUBLIC CELEBRATIONS OF THE MASS

4. When may the extraordinary form of the Mass be used in parishes?

In parishes where a stable group of the faithful are attached to the extraordinary form of the Mass, they may approach the pastor, who is to support their petition willingly while taking into consideration the overall pastoral needs of the parish. No permissions are required.⁸

5. Which edition of the *Missale Romanum* may be used for the celebration of the extraordinary form of Mass?

Only the edition of the *Missale Romanum* promulgated by Blessed John XXIII in 1962 may be used for the celebration of Mass according to the extraordinary form. The Missal is available in an imprint authorized by Cardinal John O'Connor from Roman Catholic Books.⁹ Latin-English Sunday Missals for the faithful are also available from the same firm.

¹ Pope Benedict XVI, Cover letter to the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum*.

² Ibid.

³ This *Missal* was most recently promulgated in 2001 as the third typical edition, by the Servant of God, John Paul II.

⁴ This *Missal* was most recently promulgated in 1962 as the seventh typical edition by the Blessed John XXIII.

⁵ Cf. Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum* [SP], article 1.

⁶ Cf. SP, no. 2.

⁷ Cf. SP, no. 4.

⁸ Cf. SP, no. 5§1.

⁹ Post Office Box 2286, Fort Collins, CO 80522-2286: <http://www.booksforcatholics.com>

6. May a pastor impose the extraordinary form of the Mass on a parish?

No. The extraordinary form is celebrated publicly only in response to a request from a group of the faithful.

7. May the extraordinary form of the Mass be used in religious communities?

Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life who wish to do so may celebrate according to the extraordinary form in their own oratories for their own communities.¹⁰

8. When the *extraordinary form* is celebrated, what calendar and *Lectionary* may be used?

Whenever the extraordinary form of the Roman Liturgy is celebrated, the readings contained in the Missal should be used according to the calendar of the Missal of Blessed John XXIII is followed.¹¹ The *Ecclesia Dei* Commission has been charged with studying the eventual incorporation of new saints and some of the prefaces of the revised *Missale* into the *Missale Romanum* of Blessed John XXIII.

9. If the Altar in a Church where the extraordinary form is celebrated is without steps, how can the rubrics be observed?

Most sanctuaries can be accommodated to meet the rubrical needs of the extraordinary form. When this is not possible, a Church better suited to this celebration should be chosen.

10. Does the wider use of the extraordinary form of the rites of Holy Week reflect a change in the Church's teaching on anti-Semitism ?

No. The 1962 *Missale Romanum* already reflected Blessed John XXIII's revision of liturgical language often construed as anti-Semitic. In 1965, the watershed statement *Nostra Aetate*, of the Second Vatican Council then repudiated all forms of anti-Semitism as having no place within Christian life. When Pope Paul VI issued the *Missale Romanum* of 1969, the only prayer for the Jewish people in the Roman liturgy was completely revised for Good Friday to reflect a renewed understanding of the Jews as God's chosen people, "first to hear the word of God."

Throughout his papacy, John Paul II worked effectively to reconcile the Church with the Jewish people and to strengthen new bonds of friendship. In 1988, Pope John Paul II gave permission for the Mass to be celebrated according the *Missale Romanum* of 1962 only as a pastoral provision to assist Catholics who remained attached to the previous rites, thereby hoping to develop closer bonds with the family of the Church.

By this new Apostolic Letter, Pope Benedict XVI is merely extending such permission for wider pastoral application, but remains committed to "the need to overcome past prejudices, misunderstandings, indifference and the language of contempt and hostility [and to continue] the Jewish-Christian dialogue...to enrich and deepen the bonds of friendship which have developed."¹²

OTHER PUBLIC CELEBRATIONS OF THE EXTRAORDINARY FORM

¹⁰ Cf. SP, no. 3.

¹¹ Cf. SP, no. 6.

¹² Pope Benedict XVI, On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate*, October 27, 2005.

11. May the extraordinary form of the other sacraments also be celebrated?

For the good of souls, a pastor may also grant permission for the celebration of the other Sacraments, Christian Funerals or other occasional celebrations according to the extraordinary form, when requested to do so by priests or a group of the faithful.¹³

12. Which edition of the *Roman Ritual* may be used for the celebration of the extraordinary form of the Sacraments of Baptism, Matrimony, Penance, the Anointing of the Sick and the *Rite of Funerals*?¹⁴

While *Summorum Pontificum* makes reference only to “the older ritual,” it may be presumed that this is the ritual in force in 1962. In the dioceses of the United States of America, that was the *Collectio rituum, ad instar Appendicis Ritualis Romani in Usum Cleri Archdioecesium et Dioecesium Fœderatorum Americæ Septentrionalis Civitatum* (1961). While this edition is no longer in print, the 1964 edition, which contains several minor adaptations introduced between 1960 and 1962, is available from the Priestly Society of Saint Peter Publications Service.¹⁵

13. May Priests pray the Breviary according to the former rites?

Yes. Clerics in Holy Orders may use the *Breviarium Romanum* promulgated by Blessed John XXIII in 1962.¹⁶ While this two-volume edition is out of print, used copies can usually be obtained from purveyors of used liturgical books, such as loomebooks.com, bn.com, and Amazon.com.

THE DIOCESAN BISHOP

14. Is the role of the Diocesan Bishop in supervising the Sacred Liturgy diminished by this Apostolic Letter?

No. The norms “do not in any way lessen the Bishop’s own authority and responsibility, either for the liturgy or for the pastoral care of [the] faithful. Each Bishop, in fact, is the moderator of the liturgy in his own Diocese.”¹⁷ As such, he is required both to implement the universal norms of the Church as well as to intervene to prevent abuses from arising with regard to liturgical celebrations in his diocese.

15. May the Diocesan Bishop establish norms concerning the implementation of *Summorum Pontificum*?

Yes. While the apostolic letter itself provides little detailed information about the role of the Bishop in the implementation and observance of its provisions, it is expected that he will maintain overall direction of the sacred liturgy within his diocese (cc. 392, 838 §1). Enacting particular legislation governing aspects related to this issue, in accord with the authority granted to Bishops under canon 838 §4, is one way that the Bishop can exercise his legitimate authority in these matters.

¹³ Cf. SP, no. 5§3 and 9§1.

¹⁴ Cf. SP, art. 9§1.

¹⁵ Griffin Rd., PO Box 196, Elmhurst, PA 18416: <http://store.fraternitypublications.com/official-liturgical-books.html>

¹⁶ Cf. SP, no. 9§3.

¹⁷ Cf. SP, no. 7.

16. May the Diocesan Bishop celebrate the Rite of Confirmation according to the former rite?

Yes. The Bishop, upon a legitimate request, may celebrate the *Rite of Confirmation* according to the extraordinary form as found in the edition of the *Pontificale Romanum* in effect in 1962.¹⁸ While this three-volume edition is out of print, used copies can usually be obtained from purveyors of used liturgical books, such as loomebooks.com, bn.com, and Amazon.com.

17. Where may Bishops turn for support and assistance with the implementation of the *Apostolic Letter* and the supervision of the extraordinary form of the Roman Liturgy?

The Committee on the Liturgy and its Secretariat are charged by the USCCB with the supervision of the implementation of the provisions of *Ecclesia Dei* and will continue to provide support and advice on this important pastoral initiative.

18. Who regulates the implementation of this Apostolic Letter for the Holy See?

For the Holy See, the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei* is charged with assuring proper observance and application of the norms of the Apostolic Letter.

19. What commentaries on the rubrics of the 1962 *Missale Romanum* could be helpful to Bishops and Liturgy Offices?

Bishops and Liturgy Offices will find many of the answers to their rubrical questions in commentaries like *The Celebration of Mass: A study of the Rubrics of the Roman Missal* (3 volumes) by John Berthram O'Connell (Bruce Publishing Company, 1956). While these commentaries are generally out of print, used copies can usually be obtained from purveyors of used liturgical books, such as loomebooks.com, bn.com, and Amazon.com. A simple English translation of the rubrics of the 1962 *Missale Romanum* is also available from the Priestly Society of Saint Peter Publications Service¹⁹ under the title *General Rubrics of the 1962 Missal*.

THE PRIEST CELEBRANT OF THE EXTRAORDINARY FORM

20. If a Priest is asked to celebrate a Mass or Baptism or Marriage in Latin, must the extraordinary form be used?

No. Unless an explicit request for the extraordinary form is made, Mass (or any of the Sacraments) may be celebrated according to the post-conciliar rites in Latin, whenever this is judged pastorally appropriate.

21. If a priest fails to demonstrate a minimum rubrical or linguistic ability to celebrate the extraordinary form, may he still celebrate the 1962 *Missale Romanum*?

No. Article 5 §4 of the apostolic letter requires that in order to celebrate the extraordinary form a Priest must possess a minimum capability. The word used to describe this capability, *idonei*, is customarily rendered as *worthy* or *suitable*. There appear to be three aspects to this suitability:

¹⁸ Cf. SP, no. 9§2.

¹⁹ Griffin Rd., PO Box 196, Elmhurst, PA 18416: <http://store.fraternitypublications.com/official-liturgical-books.html>

1. **Ability to understand the Latin and the rubrics of the rite being celebrated.** An informal one-on-one examination of prospective celebrants of the extraordinary form could be used by Bishops to determine the competence of each candidate. While an academic understanding of Latin should not be required, a short discussion with an individual Priest, asking him to demonstrate: (1) the meaning of the rubrics of a part of the *Ordo Missae* and (2) the meaning of one of the collects of the Missal should suffice for a demonstration of competency.
2. **Adherence to the Church and her Teaching.** In prior private correspondence with local ordinaries, the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei* frequently noted that “Celebrants of the ‘Tridentine’ Mass should not fail in their preaching and contacts with the faithful attending such Masses to emphasize their own adherence to the legislation of the universal Church and their acknowledgment of the doctrinal and juridical value of the liturgy revised after the Second Vatican Council. While such assurances are not explicitly required by *Summorum Pontificum*, the Bishop may well include such considerations in a determination of the worthiness of an individual celebrant.
3. **The Priest should also not be “impeded by law”** (Art. 5), that is, he must be free of any irregularity or censure to exercise the sacramental ministry.

22. What happens if a pastor is unable to fulfill the request of the faithful?

“Should some problem arise which the parish priest cannot resolve, the local Ordinary will always be able to intervene, in full harmony, however, with all that has been laid down by the new norms of the *Motu Proprio*.”²⁰ Should the local ordinary be unable to respond to the request, it may be referred to the *Ecclesia Dei* Commission.²¹

23. As a rule, is it possible for a priest to abandon the ordinary form entirely?

No. The Holy Father states unequivocally that “in order to experience full communion, the priests of the communities adhering to the former usage cannot, as a matter of principle, exclude celebrating according to the new books. The total exclusion of the new rite would not in fact be consistent with the recognition of its value and holiness.”²²

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Cf. SP, no. 7. *Ecclesia Dei* is a Commission of the Holy See which was formed by Pope John Paul II by his 1984 Apostolic Letter of the same name.

²² Pope Benedict XVI, Cover letter to the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum*.

Prior Provisions and the Current Norms

24. Prior to the publication of this Apostolic Letter, what provisions have been in force?

By a the letter of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (*Quattuor abhinc annos*, 1984), Pope John Paul II granted to diocesan Bishops the use of an indult whereby priests and faithful would be allowed to celebrate the 1962 edition of the *Missale Romanum*, providing that such priests or faithful: (1) accepted the legitimacy and doctrinal exactitude of the post-conciliar *Missale Romanum*; (2) celebrated these rites in a church designated by the bishop; (3) and celebrated these rites according to the 1962 *Missale Romanum*, without intermingling the post-conciliar rites. Pope John Paul II encouraged Bishops to make “a wide and generous application” of this indult in the *motu proprio Ecclesia Dei Afflicta* (1988).

25. How does the new Apostolic Letter differ from these previous provisions?

The Apostolic Letter of Pope Benedict XVI differs from the previous provisions in the following ways:

	<i>Quattuor Abhinc Annos</i> and <i>Ecclesia Dei Adflicta</i>	<i>Summorum Pontificum</i>
What books may be used?	The 1962 <i>Missale Romanum</i>	The 1962 <i>Missale Romanum</i> and all other Roman liturgical rites in force in 1962
Who may permit the use of these books?	The Diocesan Bishop may grant permission to priests or groups of the faithful at his discretion, but should be wide and generous in application of this indult	Any Priest of the Latin Church may celebrate the extraordinary form privately. Pastors are asked to receive willingly the request of groups of the faithful for the Mass and the Sacraments according to the extraordinary form.
Who supervises the celebration of the Liturgy of either form?	The Diocesan Bishop supervises the correct celebration of all liturgical rites. The Diocesan Bishop must report to the Holy See on progress of indults he has granted	The Diocesan Bishop maintains vigilance over the correct celebration of all liturgical rites, both ordinary and extraordinary. If the pastor is unable to respond to the request of a group of the faithful, the Bishop receives the request. If the Bishop is not able to respond, the matter may be referred to the <i>Ecclesia Dei</i> Commission, which enjoys competence over the extraordinary rite on behalf of the Holy See. Bishops are also invited to send an account of their experiences to the Holy See in three years' time.
Where may celebrations of the extraordinary form take place?	The celebrations take place only in a place designated by the Diocesan Bishop, but usually not in a parish Church.	There is no restriction on where the extraordinary form may be celebrated.
Must those celebrating the older form acknowledge the current liturgical books?	A condition of granting the indult is acknowledgement of the legitimacy and doctrinal exactitude of the current <i>Missale Romanum</i> .	There is no requirement for a determination of acceptance of the current <i>Roman Missal</i> by those seeking to celebrate the extraordinary form, although this appears to be presumed.
May rites from the two forms be mixed?	No admixture of the rites of the 1962 and current editions of the <i>Missale</i>	The vernacular edition of biblical texts approved for liturgical use for Mass may

Romanum is allowed.

be used in the extraordinary form, while the 1962 calendar is to be followed. The Ecclesia Dei Commission will study the eventual integration of new saints and some prefaces from the ordinary form into the extraordinary Missal.

26. Why are the present norms not adequate to meet these needs?

In his cover letter, the Holy Father notes that while the present norms have been applied to good pastoral effect in many circumstances, difficulties remain “because of the lack of precise juridical norms, particularly because Bishops, in such cases, frequently feared that the authority of the Council would be called into question.”²³ The new norms are intended “to free Bishops from constantly having to evaluate anew how they are to respond to various situations.”²⁴

27. *Ecclesia Dei* (1991) established that "there be no interchanging of texts and rites of the two missals." Does *Summorum Pontificum* change this?

No. With the exception of the planned introduction of new Saints and certain Prefaces by the Ecclesia Dei Commission, no elements from the ordinary form may be introduced into the extraordinary form. Nor may elements from the extraordinary form be introduced into celebrations of the ordinary form.

28. Does this action call into question the liturgical reform of the Second Vatican Council?

No. The Holy Father makes clear that the current *Missale Romanum* is the ordinary form (*forma ordinaria*) of the Eucharistic Liturgy. The extraordinary form is found in the 1962 Missal of Blessed John XXIII.²⁵

29. When will the Apostolic Letter take effect?

The Apostolic letter will take effect on September 14, 2007, the feast of the Triumph of the Holy Cross.

ON THE ORDINARY AND EXTRAORDINARY FORMS OF THE *MISSALE ROMANUM*

30. Why was the 1962 Missal of Blessed John XXIII chosen as the extraordinary form?

From the time of the Council of Trent to the Second Vatican Council there were seven official editions of the *Missale Romanum*. They were promulgated by Popes Saint Pius V (1570), Clement VI (1604), Urban VIII (1634), Leo XII (1994), Saint Pius X (1911), Benedict XV (1920), and Blessed John XXIII (1962). The 1962 edition was chosen as the last edition of the *Missale Romanum* promulgated before the Second Vatican Council.

31. Are the extraordinary and ordinary forms entirely different?

The Holy Father observes that there is “no contradiction between them and that the history of liturgical books is characterized by “growth and progress, but no rupture.”²⁶

²³ Pope Benedict XVI, Cover letter to the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum*.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Pope Benedict XVI, Cover letter to the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum*.

²⁶ Ibid.

What earlier generations held as sacred, remains sacred and great for us too, and it cannot be all of a sudden entirely forbidden or even considered harmful. It behooves all of us to preserve the riches which have developed in the Church's faith and prayer, and to give them their proper place.²⁷

32. How does participation of the faithful in the *Missale Romanum* of Blessed John XXIII differ from the *Missale Romanum* of the Servant of God, John Paul II?

In both the ordinary and extraordinary forms of the *Missale Romanum*, full, conscious, and active participation of the faithful is to be desired above all else.²⁸ In both forms, this begins with an interior participation in the sacrifice of Christ, to which the gathered assembly is joined by the prayers and rites of the Mass. The ordinary form of the rite customarily accomplishes this participation through listening and responding to the prayers of the Mass in the vernacular, and by taking part in forms of exterior communal action. The extraordinary form attempts this participation largely through listening to the prayers in Latin and following the words and actions of the Priest and joining our hearts to “what is said by him in the Name of Christ and [what] Christ says [to] him.”²⁹

33. How does the role of the Priest differ in the *Missale Romanum* of Blessed John XXIII differ from the *Missale Romanum* of the Servant of God, John Paul II?

The major differences concerning the role of the Priest in the ordinary and extraordinary forms pertain to orientation and language. During most moments of the Mass the Priest faces the altar with his back to the people. All prayers are in Latin, with only the readings and the Homily in the vernacular.

34. What other major differences characterize the extraordinary and ordinary forms of the *Missale Romanum*?

Extraordinary Form (1962)	Ordinary Form (2007)
includes 1% of Old Testament	includes 14% of Old Testament
includes 17% of New Testament	includes 71% of New Testament
Begins with prayers at the foot of the altar prayed privately by priest and server	Begins with a greeting and communal penitential rite
One Eucharistic Prayer: the Roman Canon	Nine Eucharistic Prayers, the first of which is the Roman Canon
Faithful usually receive Holy Communion only under one kind	Allows for wider distribution of Holy Communion under both kinds to the faithful
Last Gospel and Prayers to Saint Michael the Archangel included in closing rites	Closing rites include Prayer after Communion, Blessing and Dismissal
Preserves prayers and rites of 1570 with some changes	Simplifies prayers and rites in the light of contemporary research and understanding
Only clerics or “altar boys” perform liturgical ministry	Restores lay liturgical ministries and encourages careful differentiation of roles

35. Does the 1962 *Missale Romanum* presume that the Priest celebrates Mass with his back to the people?

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 14.

²⁹ Saint Pius X, in *The Daily Missal and Liturgical Manual from the Editio Typica of the Roman Missal and Breviary*, 1962, Baronius Press, London, 2004, p. 897.

Yes. By its frequent rubrical directives to “turn toward the people,” the Missal expresses this presumption.

36. What are the reasons why people remain strongly attached to the preconciliar form?

The Holy Father suggests a number of reasons. In the case of the followers of Archbishop Lefebvre, while the preconciliar Missal became “an external mark of identity,” it is clear that “the reasons for the break, which arose over this, however, were at a deeper level.”³⁰ Some remained strongly attached to rites with which they had become familiar from childhood. A primary cause of this affection in other faithful Catholics was the false sense of creativity unfortunately practiced by some in the celebration of the postconciliar liturgical rites, leading to “deformations of the liturgy which were hard to bear.”³¹ The Holy Father adds a personal note in his cover letter: “I am speaking from experience, since I too lived through that period with all its hopes and its confusion. And I have seen how arbitrary deformations of the liturgy caused deep pain to individuals totally rooted in the faith of the Church.”³² Finally, the Holy Father describes those young people who “have discovered this liturgical form, felt its attraction and found in it a form of encounter with the Mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist, particularly suited to them.”³³ With this *motu proprio* he is responding to all three of these groups.

37. Won't the new norms cause division in parishes and exacerbate the tensions between those attached to the preconciliar and postconciliar forms?

The Holy Father sees such fears as “quite unfounded,” since the kind of rubrical and linguistic skills required for the preconciliar form is not found very often. It is, therefore, “clearly seen that the new Missal will certainly remain the ordinary Form of the Roman Rite, not only on account of the juridical norms, but also because of the actual situation of the communities of the faithful.”³⁴

38. How will the two forms influence each other?

The Holy Father expresses his hope that the new saints and some of the new prefaces can eventually be integrated into the 1962 *Missal* by the *Ecclesia Dei* Commission, while the use of the preconciliar form will enhance an appreciation in the ordinary form for “the sacrality which attracts many people to the former usage.” In this regard he emphasizes: “The most sure guarantee that the Missal of Paul VI can unite parish communities and be loved by them consists in its being celebrated with great reverence in harmony with the liturgical directives.”³⁵

39. Are there additional unresolved questions concerning the implementation of the Apostolic Letter?

Yes. A series of dubia have been submitted to the proper Roman dicasteries on a number of outstanding questions. Bishops will be informed as soon as a response has been received to these inquiries.

³⁰ Pope Benedict XVI, Cover letter to the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum*.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Pope Benedict XVI, Cover letter to the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum*.

40. What mandate did the fathers of the Second Vatican Council give for the renewal of the Sacred Liturgy?

In the *Constitution on the Liturgy (Sacrosanctum concilium)*, number 50, the Council Fathers decreed that:

The Order of Mass is to be revised in a way that will bring out more clearly the intrinsic nature and purpose of its several parts, as also the connection between them, and will more readily achieve the devout, active participation of the faithful.

For this purpose the rites are to be simplified, due care being taken to preserve their substance; elements that, with the passage of time, came to be duplicated or were added with but little advantage are now to be discarded; other elements that have suffered injury through accident of history are now, as may seem useful or necessary, to be restored to the vigor they had in the traditions of the Fathers.

August 18, 2007

Most Reverend William Skylstad
Bishop of Spokane
President
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
3211 Fourth Street, N.E.
Washington D.C. 20017

Dear Bishop Skylstad:

In the course of the most recent meeting of the USCCB Committee on the Liturgy, the members considered at length questions and comments received from Bishops over the past few weeks in regard to the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum*.

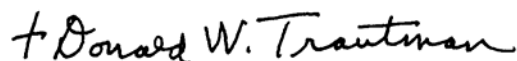
Most of the questions were able to be answered by the staff of the Secretariat and have been combined with previous questions and answers. I will, therefore, be sending a copy of the enclosed Forty Questions on *Summorum Pontificum* to all Bishops within the next few days.

There were also several questions which the Committee was unable to resolve, which I now propose be submitted by you to the competent dicasteries of the Holy See as dubia. I would urge you to remind the dicasteries of the urgency of these questions in the light of the imminent implementation date of the Apostolic Letter on September 14, 2007.

Finally, I would ask your permission to include a copy of this letter and the proposed dubia to the Bishops so that they might be aware of the actions taken in response to their concerns.

Grateful, as always, for your service to us all, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Donald Trautman
Bishop of Erie
Chairman

Proposed USCCB Dubia on the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum*

1. *stabiliter* or *continenter*?

Whereas:

The Latin text of Art. 5, § 1 of the Apostolic Constitution given to the USCCB by the Apostolic Nunciature under embargo on July 4, 2007 differs from the text found on the Vatican website. In referring to a group seeking the celebration of the 1962 *Missale Romanum*, the former text uses the adjective *stabiliter*, while the latter uses the adjective *continenter*.

DUBIUM: Which word is used in the authentic text, and how is it to be understood in describing the nature of the group approaching the pastor with a request for celebration of the 1962 *Missale Romanum*?

2. On the Abrogation of the 1917 Code of Canon Law and associated legislation

Whereas:

The extraordinary form of the *Roman Missal* is that promulgated in 1962 by Blessed John XXIII, which has never been abrogated.³⁶

With the promulgation of the 1983 CIC, and its abrogation of the 1917 Code, a short list of *variationes* to the liturgical books then in force was promulgated by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments on September 12, 1983 (Prot. No. CD 1200/83).

DUBIUM: To what extent should disciplinary questions which impact the celebration of the extraordinary form be governed by the 1983 CIC, as authentically interpreted by the Church?³⁷

³⁶ *Missae Sacrificium, iuxta editionem typicam Missalis Romani a B. Ioanne XXIII anno 1962 promulgatam et nunquam abrogatam, uti formam extraordinariam Liturgiae Ecclesiae, celebrare licet.* (SP, no. 2)

³⁷ This impacts such questions as: the requirements for fasting before the reception of Holy Communion, the celebration of Mass in the afternoon, woman as altar servers, concelebration, etc.

3. Deacons and Subdeacons

Whereas:

The roles of Deacon and Subdeacon in the Solemn High Mass of the *Missale Romanum* of 1962 were carried out, almost exclusively, by Priests;

The restoration of the Order of Deacon, called for by the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council, was carried out by Pope Paul VI in his motu proprio, *Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem* (June 18, 1967);

The former minor orders were suppressed along with tonsure and subdiaconate and the ministries of reader and acolyte were established by Pope Paul VI in his motu proprio, *Ministeria quaedam* (August 15, 1972);

DUBIUM: When the Solemn High Mass of the *Missale Romanum* of 1962 is celebrated:

- (1) May priests carry out the role of Deacon and Subdeacon?
- (2) May Deacons carry out the role of Subdeacon?
- (3) May an instituted acolyte carry out the role of Subdeacon?

4. On the Proclamation of Readings in the Vernacular

Whereas

Art. 6 declares that “in Masses celebrated with the people according to the *Missal* of Blessed John XXIII, the Readings can be proclaimed even in the vernacular, using editions that have received the *recognitio* of the Apostolic See”

The Fraternity of Saint Peter frequently recommends that after the Priest has read the Epistle or Gospel in Latin, he should turn to face the people and read the reading in English;

Various translations of the readings from the *Missale Romanum* existed in 1962;

The current *Lectionary for Mass* of the ordinary form does not correspond to the extraordinary form in several regards;

DUBIUM: How are the readings to be proclaimed in the vernacular and from which English-language source should they be derived?

5. On the use of the extraordinary form of the Confirmation Rite

Whereas

In the Apostolic Constitution, *Divinae Consortium Naturae* of August 15, 1971, Pope Paul VI solemnly changed the form of the Sacrament of Confirmation indicating that he was doing so by the use of the words: “by our supreme apostolic authority we decree and lay down that in the Latin Church the following are to be observed for the future”.

DUBIUM: Given the form for the validity of the Sacrament of Confirmation decreed by Pope Paul VI for use in the Latin Church, should that form in Latin be used in the extraordinary form for the valid administration of the Sacrament of Confirmation?