

IS IT STILL THE SAME MASS?*

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC LITURGICAL REVISIONS
AS THEY HAVE BEEN APPLIED IN SCOTLAND

The Liturgical Reforms of the First Century

During the space of nearly two thousand years since our Lord celebrated the Last Supper and told his apostles, 'Do this in remembrance of me', we know very well that there have been many reforms in the liturgy. From the formal and yet familiar context of the Passover-Supper, it has evolved into the complex ritual of the medieval Roman Pontifical High Mass. It has developed too into the hieratic and mystifying, yet very homely, Pontifical Liturgy of the Orthodox. Again, the Lord's Supper has also been revised in the style of the much simpler liturgies of the Reformers in which your fore-fathers, who are also mine, endeavoured to return to the godly face of the primitive kirk.

If we ask which of these liturgical changes has been the most far-reaching, we Western Christians are tempted to offer as an answer either the immense changes in worship which were part and parcel of the sixteenth-century Reformation of Church doctrine and order, or the reforms which have been proceeding so swiftly within my own Roman Catholic communion over the last five years.

But, of course, if we put forward these two reforms during the sixteenth and twentieth centuries as the most far-reaching liturgical reforms ever, we are mistaken. More extensive and radical than either of these reforms was the liturgical revision carried out by the early Church in the hundred years immediately after Pentecost.

During these first hundred years the early Church, while growing in self-understanding and consciousness of her own doctrine, evolved a liturgy which moved away from a group reclining round a common table and towards a larger group of worshippers, presumably standing, and certainly facing a single table at which the president stood. In the New Testament we find the Last Supper carried out (so most scholars believe) according to the ritual of the Passover Meal, we find the breaking of bread mentioned in Acts, and the Eucharist at Corinth where its association with the common meal led to the abuses which Paul condemns.

Hardly a century later, as described in Justin's *Apology*, chaps. 65 and 67, we find a relatively formal and stylistic church service. Of

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course it was in the vernacular and, as Hippolytus was to note, even in the third century the president still had the prerogative of extemporizing the central eucharistic prayer. Nevertheless the second-century liturgy is much less intimate and personal, much more a self-conscious occasion, than the New Testament breaking of bread.

This first liturgical reform carried out by the primitive Church is surely the most far-reaching of all. By comparison with it the sixteenth- and twentieth-century revisions are relatively moderate and cautious. However, having made this point, I would suggest that never subsequently has any one branch of Christendom so willingly and speedily reformed its own pattern of worship, while retaining continuity of doctrine and Church government with its immediate past, as has my own communion over the last five years.

The Liturgical Reforms of the Twentieth Century

The Roman Catholic Church's present liturgical reforms were prepared by biblical study, theological research and historical investigation over the last half-century or more. Further, during this period on the Continent of Europe many makeshift expedients have been used within the context of the Latin Mass so as to gain pastoral understanding of both the possibilities and the difficulties of Catholic worship in the vernacular. The suggestion, sometimes made by our small but vocal group of so-called traditionalists, that the reforms have been ill-conceived and unprepared is very far from the truth.

These fifty years of preparation reached their climax in the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, published by Pope Paul VI along with the other Catholic bishops at the end of the second session of the Second Vatican Council, in December 1963. It is probably true that before the Council opened the majority of the bishops were highly suspicious of any radical liturgical reform and there can be no question about the general opposition to the vernacular among most priests and laymen in our own country. This being so, it is remarkable how the reforms have in general been widely welcomed and applied with enthusiasm.

It is true that, while Roman Catholics in France, Germany and the Low Countries were well prepared for Vatican II's reforms, their co-religionists in the British Isles were not. Nevertheless, once the reforms had been decided upon, by and large they have been applied just so widely among us as on the Continent of Europe.

A few quotations from the Constitution will serve to illustrate the doctrinal basis for the practical reforms:

The liturgy is deservedly regarded as being the exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. . . . In it complete public worship is

performed by the Mystical Body of Christ, Head and members. Therefore every liturgical celebration, being the work of Christ the Priest and his Body which is the Church, is more efficacious than any other act of the Church. (art. 7)

Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious and active share in the liturgical celebrations which the nature of the liturgy demands. The Christian people, as 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people', has both a right and a duty to such participation in virtue of the sacrament of Baptism. (art. 14)

After this preamble what I would like to do is on the one hand to say a very brief word about the reform of our liturgical rites other than the central one of the Eucharist. Thereafter I will try to explain in not, I hope, too tedious detail just how the eucharistic liturgy itself has been revised. Finally I will offer a few indications of how this revision is not simply a surface one involving mere ritual changes; despite the substantial continuity of doctrine with Roman Catholic dogma as taught before the Council, there has been a definite development in our belief. Some aspects of this development were noted by Professor Fransen of Louvain in an address, delivered more than a year prior to the publication of the Constitution on the Liturgy and published in the *Scottish Journal of Theology* for March 1963.

Rites other than the Mass

For the sake of completeness, we must mention the revision which is proceeding in Roman Catholic services other than the Mass. At the present moment the following portions of the liturgy have been revised and the revisions are available both in the Latin master-text and in an English translation: Baptism of Infants, the Marriage Service, the Ordination of Bishops, Priests and Deacons, the Funeral Service, and the Holy Week Services.

Again, most of the daily breviary offices have also been revised and, even before the Latin has been published, we already have an English translation based on the unpublished Latin manuscript.

Among the services still in process of revision, we should note: first, the Baptism of Adults, Confirmation, Penance, and Anointing of the Sick; second, the relatively small but ticklish section of the breviary consisting of non-scriptural readings either from the Fathers, or from modern writers, often dealing with the significance of the saint commemorated on a particular day; third, a great variety of the less frequently held blessings.

The Mass as it was

Now to consider the very thorough revision to which the central act of worship, the Mass, has been subjected. As article 47 of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* expresses it:

At the Last Supper, on the night when he was betrayed, our Saviour instituted the eucharistic sacrifice of His body and blood. He did this so as to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the centuries until He should come again, and thus to entrust to His beloved spouse, the Church, a memorial of His death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is received, the soul is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.

But, if the Mass was to appear as a celebration of all Christ's priestly people, both its ritual and its ceremonial were badly in need of revision and so, having summarized our Catholic belief on the Mass, the bishops continue:

The rite of the Mass is to be revised so that the intrinsic nature and purpose of its several parts, as also the connection between them, can be more clearly expressed, and that devout and active participation by the faithful can be more easily achieved. Therefore, while the substance of the rites must be preserved, they are to be made more simple. Elements which with the passage of time have been duplicated, or added with little advantage, are to be discarded. If it is thought suitable or necessary, other elements which have suffered injury through the accidents of history are now to be restored to the earlier standard of the holy Fathers. (art. 50)

The last phrase, 'ad pristinam sanctorum Patrum normam', is a quotation from the words of Pope Pius V in 1570 when he published his edition of the Roman Missal which the Second Vatican Council was to replace. Although it was the declared intention of many of the liturgical revisers in the sixteenth century to carry out a liturgical reform similar to that which is now being performed, Pius V and his advisers had neither the resources nor the knowledge nor even the opportunity to do anything so far-reaching.

Articles 47 and 50 of the Constitution set out the intentions of Vatican II in regard to the liturgy of the Mass but, before we examine how these intentions have been carried out, we must have a look at a Roman Catholic Sunday Mass as it appeared both here in our own country and elsewhere in the world, before the current wave of reform.

Sunday Mass

Until ten years ago, if someone who could not follow spoken Latin attended Mass on Sundays or indeed weekdays, the only parts of the service which he would be able to understand directly would be the sermon, the scripture readings which on Sundays were generally read in the vernacular after being read in Latin, and possibly one or two semi-official prayers added after the main liturgical rite was completed.

This was the case, not only here in Scotland, but also with two exceptions throughout the Roman Catholic world. The first of these exceptions consists of the Eastern-rite Catholics who are often called, although most of them dislike the term, Uniates. While acknowledging the papal authority, they follow similar rituals to those of either the Eastern Orthodox or of the non-Chalcedonian Churches. While these Eastern-rite Catholics are relatively few, numbering about eight million between the different countries where they are found, they should not be ignored. The second exception consists of the minority of priests in Western Europe who, prior to the recent Council, would ignore the rules, at least to the extent of using the vernacular for certain portions of the Mass.

Despite the well-nigh universal use of Latin there was always a feeling of unease about it and this led to all manner of expedients to make it easier for the congregation to follow what the priest was saying and in some cases to join in. First, for about the last hundred years there has been a widespread practice of publishing vernacular translations so that the laymen might follow the Latin texts being read by the priest. Secondly, widely in France, although less widely and sometimes in face of the bishop's disapproval in Scotland, the Latin Dialogue Mass had been spreading during the nineteen forties and fifties; in this form of celebration the people would answer the priest and also join him in certain prayers, all in Latin. Third, especially in Germanic countries there was the practice of singing hymns in the vernacular, more or less related to what the priest was doing at the altar.

It will be appreciated that, where before the recent reforms a congregation had been accustomed to dialoguing the Latin of the Mass with the celebrant or to singing hymns super-added to the liturgical text, it has been extremely easy to introduce the reforms, to dialogue the same prayers in the vernacular and to sing hymns and psalms which are part of the official liturgical text. Thus Roman Catholics in France and Germany and here in Scotland in the North-East diocese of Aberdeen were well prepared for the reforms. In much of England and Ireland and here in Scotland at least in the area around Glasgow there had been virtually no preparation. It is

very striking that, even where the liturgical movement prior to 1963 had been non-existent, the reforms including the vernacular have been very widely welcomed by ordinary worshippers, particularly in our large working-class urban congregations.

Although in Rome since time immemorial the Pope has celebrated in St. Peter's basilica, facing the congregation across the altar, until about ten years ago this practice was curiously suspect among Catholics in Scotland. When in 1960 in my home town of Aberdeen the sanctuary of our cathedral was reconstructed so as to have the priest celebrating in this fashion, we were subjected to a good deal of criticism from our co-religionists in other parts of the country.

Finally, and of course this has frequently been a reproach against us both from the side of the Reformed Churches and of the Orthodox, the practice of giving the chalice to the laity practically died out in the fifteenth century and during the years prior to the recent Council it was unheard of among Roman Catholics in the Latin rite, above all here in Scotland.

Frequent Communion by the Laity

If we make these criticisms of Catholic worship prior to the recent reforms, one word must be added on the other side. This is to emphasize the astonishing increase in the number of communions over the last half-century. Until 1910 the practice was for the average Catholic layman to attend Mass each Sunday but not to communicate more often than once or twice a year, at Christmas and Easter. The result was that, apart from these two festivals, we had the practice against which the sixteenth-century Reformers so properly protested, the celebration of Mass with no one but the priest communicating.

All this has changed radically over the comparatively short space of sixty years. During 1967 a demographic survey was conducted in our Roman Catholic churches here in Scotland, and as a result we found that on an average Sunday 435,000 out of 717,000, i.e. 61 per cent of Scottish R.C.s over the age of seven, attended Mass. Of those who attended Mass, 149,000, or 34 per cent of those attending, communicated. This suggests that on average the Scottish Roman Catholic communicates about once a month, certainly a great improvement on the state of affairs prevalent during the first decade of this century. For a more detailed breakdown of this 1967 survey see the report by A. E. C. W. Spencer, *Report on the Parish Register, Religious Practice and Population of the Catholic Church in Scotland, 1967*, published by the Pastoral Research Centre, Harrow, 1968, and distributed by the Catholic Truth Society of Scotland.

The Post-conciliar Mass

Now, to list the features of an average Sunday celebration of the Eucharist in our Catholic churches here in Scotland:

(1) The Mass is almost always in English or, in the Western Isles, Gaelic. When the vernacular was first introduced, an effort was made to provide a number of celebrations, at least in the cities, which could be attended by those lay-people who preferred Mass in Latin. After the first shock of the introduction of Mass in English, there has been relatively little demand for Mass in Latin and consequently celebrations in that language are comparatively rare, only one or two being held on an average Sunday in the city of Edinburgh.

(2) In the majority of our churches the priest now faces the congregation and, if the sanctuary and chancel have not yet been reconstructed, a temporary wooden altar, often unsightly, is set up.

(3) In most cases the priest does not read everything himself and the Old Testament lesson and the epistle are committed to lay-readers; at all events the laity invariably join in the responses and in reciting the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Sanctus, the Gloria in excelsis, and so on.

(4) Singing is common and, so far from its being super-added to the official text of the service, it forms an integral part of it.

(5) The whole rite is much more supple and adaptable and there is no longer the old, rigid distinction between High Mass, with almost everything sung, and Low Mass, with everything said. It is now possible to decide which parts to sing and which to say. For instance, at the entry we may choose to sing or say an entry psalm, or to sing a hymn, or simply to read a brief introductory text, in accordance with the needs and capabilities of the local community, rather than according to some rigidly uniform universal order of service.

(6) Unfortunately the rules about the laity receiving Holy Communion from the chalice are complicated and tend, at least in Scotland, to be administered in a restrictive way. Apart from enclosed retreats or the case of the bride and groom at their Nuptial Eucharist, it is very rarely possible for the laity to receive under both kinds. The objection is often raised by conservative clergy that, given the large numbers who present themselves for Holy Communion in our city churches, it would be impossible for the priest to present the chalice to each one and therefore we must not think of reintroducing the practice. Perhaps one may be permitted to speculate on the likelihood of a parish priest remarking that, in view of the numbers attending Mass, it will be impossible to make the collection in a dignified fashion and therefore this item in the liturgy should perforce be omitted!

(7) Instead of the same pair of readings (Epistle and Gospel) being repeated on the same recurring Sunday each year, we now

have a Sunday Lectionary spread over a three-year cycle so that, if a passage is read in 1970, it will not be used again on Sundays until 1973. There are normally three readings on Sundays, Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel. For those who attend Mass on weekdays, this Sunday Lectionary is complemented by a Weekday Lectionary spread over a two-year cycle and further, for those who use the Breviary, there is a further daily set of readings from scripture. All in all, whatever was true in the past, it is hardly fair to suggest that nowadays Roman Catholics do not hear the scriptures read to them!

These Reforms in Practice

Presbyterians often ask me about two points. When they have heard of the extent of our thorough-going reform of the Mass-liturgy, they want to know just how widespread it has been. If these friends in the Reformed Churches are well informed about the liturgical movement on the continent of Europe, they also know how in general our clergy in Scotland and England dragged their heels in the matter during the twenty years prior to the Vatican Council. It is therefore worth stressing that the vernacular and almost all the other reforms have been very widely introduced among our congregations and have had a great success. The very fact that the new texts have been translated, not only into English, but also into Scots Gaelic, shows how Mass in the vernacular is taken to be the norm.

A second point on which Presbyterians often enquire is as to the availability of texts in English for the laity. Here again the answer is that there is a great mass of cheap pamphlets containing the English Common (the invariable prayers) of the Mass. Some of these are indicated at the end of this paper.

Of course the introduction of the reforms has not been a complete story of success. While the laity will answer the spoken responses readily enough, the standard of singing in Scottish Catholic churches is generally poor. Again, it is not surprising that many clergy approach the reformed liturgy with a legalistic attitude and a lack of imagination and that, when we have been unused to much vernacular worship for so long, both priests and lay-readers are frequently inaudible from the back of a church. These are all understandable human failings and doubtless they will be cured in time.

Doctrinal Implications of the Renewal

I would like to suggest that, while as a result of Vatican II's liturgical reforms, the Roman Catholic Church's teaching certainly remains the same on all essential points, these reforms have led to new

emphases and many of these emphases point to a closer approach to positions upheld by the Reformers.

Here are seven of these new emphases:

(i) Because the Catholic liturgy is being celebrated in the vernacular, there is a new stress on the fact that the sacraments are signs of faith and there is much less mention of the doctrine of *ex opere operato*. Rightly understood, of course, both the aspect of the sacraments as signs of faith and the second aspect, that they achieve their effect *ex opere operato*, are quite compatible. *Ex opere operato* means that, if we celebrate in faith certain simple rites bequeathed to us by Christ, his mighty power will be with us and our sanctification will be brought about, not by our own puny efforts, but by his infinitely powerful grace. The liturgy being celebrated in the vernacular, there is much less temptation than formerly to make the mistake of treating the sacraments as somehow automatic.

(ii) Although like the Roman Canon the three new ones speak of the Eucharist as a sacrifice, all four Canons help to emphasize that the Mass is in no sense an additional sacrifice to that of Calvary. The three new prayers are less concerned with the sacrifice here and now than is the Roman Canon; these new prayers are more concerned with the relationship of the Eucharist to the dead and risen Christ. As Trent itself said in session 22, chap. 1 (DB 938):

Although Christ was only going to offer himself once on the altar of the cross to the Father and thus to achieve eternal redemption, . . . so that he might bequeath to his beloved spouse, the Church, a visible sacrifice by which the bloody sacrifice would be made present, by which its memory might remain for ever, and by which its saving virtue might be applied, . . . he offered himself under the appearances of bread and wine to God the Father and told the Apostles, and their successors in the priesthood, that they should offer, in the words: Do this for a remembrance of me.

We do not believe that the Mass adds to the sacrifice of Calvary; we simply hold that it makes the unique sacrifice of Calvary present in our midst here and now.

(iii) In the renewed Catholic liturgy of the Mass there is still a recognition of our belief in the real presence of Christ through the conversion of the elements and the new rite provides for three genuflections by the celebrant, first after the consecration of the bread, second after the consecration of the wine, and lastly immediately before the communion. Of course, because the consecrated elements still produce the physical and chemical effects of bread and wine (a fact which Catholic teaching does not deny) it is possible within the bounds of Roman doctrine to speak of these elements as still being *in a sense* bread and wine. The language of the new Canon 4 speaks

of the consecrated bread as 'bread' and the element of a meal is underlined in such rubrics as the requirement that the unleavened bread should '*revera uti cibus appareat*', that it be broken for distribution, and that a large paten should be used after the fashion of the Church of Scotland. Again, the practice is spreading of placing the fragment of the consecrated wafer, not on the communicant's tongue, but into his hand. These ceremonial changes all tend to place less emphasis on adoration of the consecrated elements and more on the action of eating and drinking. This is surely a Biblical trend and it ought to appeal to our Presbyterian friends.

(iv) In addressing you last year Principal George said, 'we should expound the doctrine of the eucharistic presence before that of eucharistic sacrifice'. A Roman Catholic would want to agree with this and to add that, if a Catholic believes in the Mass as a sacrifice, this is because he believes that in it there is present the Paschal Christ, whose death in history is a past event, but who in his ascended and exalted existence pleads for ever his eternal sacrifice. In the new Order of Mass, not to mention the revised Easter Vigil which is now almost twenty years old, the emphasis is squarely on the Resurrection of Christ as being absolutely central to the whole mystery of salvation.

(v) The very fact that local churches have been given so much initiative in promoting the liturgical renewal shows a marked move away from the post-Tridentine defensive pyramidal view of the Church, as if the Pope had a hot-line to the Holy Ghost and used the bishops simply as a channel by which he could pass on to the rest of us what he heard from on high. The Holy Spirit speaks, not only to the Pope, but also to the local churches and in them he speaks, not only to the bishops, but also to the pastors and to the laity.

Indeed the Constitution on the Liturgy itself would never have been debated and eventually promulgated, had it not been for lengthy preparation over the years by local pastors who perceived this need, long before it had become apparent either to the Pope or to the majority of the bishops. On the other hand, we cannot say that the Holy Spirit makes his voice heard through a simple counting of votes, not that I am suggesting that the Church of Scotland says this! If we had simply counted the votes of laymen and women, of priests, and of bishops, it is morally certain that the Mass would still have been in Latin.

(vi) Because the Canon of the Mass in the vernacular emphasizes the role of Christ, the unique high-priest, it thereby rightly lays less emphasis on the role of the ordained minister and so we can hope in the future to hear less use of the misleading phrase '*sacerdos alter Christus*', as if the layman did not also share in the priesthood of Christ. We believe, as does the Church of Scotland, that the

ordained minister has a necessary role in the celebration of the Eucharist, but neither Presbyterians nor Catholics would assert that this essential role of the ordained ministerial priest precludes Christ in the Holy Spirit being in immediate contact with each believer. In our Catholic liturgical reforms the whole emphasis, as mentioned above in articles 7 and 14 of the Liturgy Constitution, is on the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. As this doctrine is taught so clearly by Aquinas in the *Summa Theologica*, 3a pars, q. 63, it is very odd that many Catholic lay people speak as if it was first invented by the Protestant Reformers!

(vii) Because a more important place is being given to scripture reading in our worship and because our preaching is becoming steadily more Bible-based, more prominence is now being given to the central evangelical doctrine, that salvation is not the achievement of our own human works or merits but is brought about for us by the utterly free and unmerited, sovereign grace of Christ. This, if I am not mistaken, is what the Reformation protest was principally concerned with and this, we would argue, is the very doctrine which session 6 of Trent was also at pains to defend. As you are doubtless aware, Barth and Kung reached the conclusion that there was no difference of substance between the Biblical doctrine of grace as expounded by the former and the account of Trent's teaching as presented by the latter.

Of course a Reformed Churchman might properly comment that, even if Trent itself taught an unexceptionable doctrine, nevertheless Roman practice before and since has frequently implied that human works are a positive cause of our justification and sanctification. As it happens, not only do the Bible and Biblical preaching now figure much more prominently in our worship, but the effects of this are becoming evident in popular Catholic piety and devotion. If the liturgical renewal in the Catholic Church is thus leading to much more emphasis on the sovereign action of Christ drawing us to himself in the Holy Spirit, this surely is a great gain and it implies that these ritual reforms are leading to a new and healthy emphasis in our whole Christian life.

TEXTS WHICH MIGHT BE CONSULTED

- (a) *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* may be found in *The Documents of Vatican II* (Geoffrey Chapman).
- (b) *The New Order of Mass*, containing the invariable prayers and all four Canons, is published in many editions but the cheapest is available from John S. Burns, Glasgow, at 5p.
- (c) *The Complete Sunday Lectionary and Mass Book* (Geoffrey Chapman, 87½p.) gives

the readings for Sundays and major feast days during the three years of the Sunday cycle, also the four Canons.

- (d) *The Lectionary*, giving both Sunday readings in the three-year cycle and also weekday readings, is available in several editions, the cheapest being at £3.50 from Geoffrey Chapman.
- (e) *The Rite of Infant Baptism* is published in cheap pamphlet form by John S. Burns, Glasgow.
- (f) *The Prayer of the Church* (Geoffrey Chapman, £3.50) contains all that has so far appeared of the new Roman Breviary.

JOHN SYMON

NOTES OF RESPONSE*

It is a great joy to have such a conference as this in an atmosphere of unconstrained friendliness and brotherhood free from the mutual suspicion, not to say hatred, that was once all too common.

Dr. Lukas Vischer has written (article in *Studia Liturgica*, V. 2):

When we know that in Christ we are also bound together with the members of other churches, we learn indeed to view their celebration of the Eucharist with other eyes. We understand that Christ is also present with them. We no longer judge their action in the first place from the viewpoint of error . . . but begin with the assumption that the Holy Spirit is also at work and brings fruit among them. This insight is the presupposition for every ecumenical conversation on the Eucharist.

Today this spirit has been evident. We deeply appreciate Fr. Symon's presence and the whole tone of his paper.

We rejoice in the developments in the Roman Communion which underlie the recent revision of the Mass. If the changes that Rome is making today had been made in the sixteenth century, the whole history of Christendom would have been very different.

Apart from the obvious things, such as the use of the vernacular, the wider use of Holy Scripture in the Mass, and the incorporation of the preaching of the Word into the Service, we particularly welcome the fact that, as the Rev. Professor P. Fransen puts it (*S.J.T.*, Vol. 16, no. 1):

* Given by Rev. John Heron, B.D., S.T.M., Stevenston, Vice-President of the Society, to the Exposition by Rev. John Symon entitled 'Is it still the same Mass?'

the draft on the Holy Liturgy . . . presupposes a conception of the Church and the Sacraments remarkably richer than the one we usually find in the manuals.

The conception of the Church as the People of God held together by His indwelling, and within which some are called by God to the Ministry, seems to us to be much more in accordance with Scripture than the traditional Roman view of the Church as a pyramid with all hierarchical powers transmitted through the Pope who alone has plenary priesthood and jurisdiction. From this more Biblical understanding of the Church the stress on the need for the active participation of the laity in the Liturgy follows. This we can only welcome. Many of us are endeavouring to increase the people's participation in worship in our own Church, and feel a little envious of the extent to which this is already achieved in the new Mass.

We also welcome the emphasis in the Roman liturgical reforms on the place of faith in the sacraments, thus correcting the tendency which was once common to treat them almost as mechanical with an over-emphasis on the due performance of the ritual and a misleading stress on the *ex opere operato*.

Here, however, I think it necessary to sound a note of caution. If the sacraments are seen merely as signs of faith there is grave danger of slipping into the Baptist position. I have come across evidence that some in the Roman Church are tending to do this, and to find it very difficult to defend the incorporation of children into the Church in Holy Baptism. While faith must always be given its full place, the primary emphasis in the sacraments must surely be on the grace of God, understood in a fully personal way, which, as Karl Rahner says, is given to men (*die vorgebene Gnade*) in the sacraments though it only becomes effective when it is accepted in faith (*die angenommene Gnade*).

We in the Scottish Reformed tradition would accept the statement of Professor Fransen (op. cit.):

The sacraments, authentically celebrated in the Church . . . have their own intrinsic 'truth', they have the *veritas sacramenti*, that is to say, in their liturgical symbolism they really convey what they actually give us. As the Catechisms say, they signify what they give us and so, in that sense, they are *true*. Their signs neither lie to us nor deceive us. But in the personal act of faith by which the recipient has accepted grace, obviously always *by virtue of* the divine priority in all grace, and *therefore* by virtue of the *opus operatum*, those signs assume their *veritas simpliciter*, which means that on the personal level of our engagement they fully actualize what they signify and present in their sacred symbolism. Thus in our engagement of faith this truth of the sacraments attains its

full end and meaning and, with the liturgical 'Amen' which is at the very foundation of our Christian faith, closes the dialogue which God has begun.

On the new Order of Mass there are three comments I wish to make after only a very brief study:

(1) The tendency to Mariolatry, though I know Roman Catholics would reject this term, seems to me to be largely eliminated. I still do not like the request in the introductory rites to Her and to the angels and saints to pray for us to the Lord, for this seems to erode the sole mediatorship of Christ, but I think most of us could accept the way in which in the Eucharistic prayers the honour which all Christians owe to Her is expressed.

(2) For a very long period one of the chief differences between Roman Catholics and Reformed Churchmen has been over the doctrine of transubstantiation. I wonder whether this is really crucial. No one today really thinks in terms of the Aristotelian metaphysic within which the doctrine of transubstantiation is expressed. May we not, then, attempt to 'demythologize' this doctrine? It seems to me that if we ask what meaning the doctrine was originally meant to express, the answer must be that in the Eucharist, though the elements bear no visible sign of change, they have a meaning and effect over and above their natural one, for the Risen Christ is truly and objectively present in the Eucharist, and He uses the elements as means whereby He gives Himself to His believing people.

I suggest that the treatment of the Real Presence in the late Donald Baillie's book *The Theology of the Sacraments* (pp. 97ff), taken together with that classic of Scottish Reformed sacramental teaching – the Sermons of Robert Bruce – safeguards the essential doctrine of the Real Presence which the doctrine of transubstantiation attempts to conserve, though in an untenable way. There is here less difference between Reformed and Roman Christians than is often thought (cf. Robert Bruce, *The Mystery of the Lord's Supper*, pp. 43f):

I do not call them signs for the reason that men commonly call them signs, because they only signify something, as the bread signifies the Body of Christ, and the wine signifies the Blood of Christ; I do not call them something because they only represent something. I call them signs because they have the Body and Blood of Christ conjoined with them. Indeed, so truly is the Body of Christ conjoined with the bread, and the Blood of Christ conjoined with the wine, that as soon as you receive the bread in your mouth (if you are a faithful man or woman) you receive the Body of Christ in your soul, and that by faith. And as soon as you receive the wine in your mouth, you receive the Blood of Christ in your soul, and that by faith. It is chiefly because of this function that

they are instruments to deliver and exhibit the things that they signify, and not only because of their representation are they called signs.

In this connection we welcome the explicit epiclesis which is included in each of the four Eucharistic Prayers in 'The New Order of Mass'.

(3) Protestant criticism of the Roman Mass in the past has largely centred upon the interpretation of the Mass as a sacrifice in which Christ is 'bloodlessly immolated, who once offered himself bloodily upon the cross' (Canons of Trent, c. 2, Sess. 22), thereby apparently detracting from the uniqueness and completeness of the sacrifice of Calvary. Much modern Roman teaching I have seen has sought to correct this along the lines of affirming that the sacrifice of Calvary is unrepeatable but is sacramentally made newly present in the Eucharist, and that the element of new sacrifice which is present in the rite is the sacrifice which is offered by those whom Christ has incorporated into His Body by His grace when they approach the throne of grace pleading Christ's 'one, true, pure, immortal sacrifice', and as those who have been justified by grace through faith offer themselves to God, in Christ, as a living sacrifice. This, it seems to me is the true sacrifice, the true offertory, in the Holy Communion. In the Book of Common Order it is expressed in the prayer:

And here we offer and present unto Thee ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice; and we beseech Thee mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, as, in fellowship with all the faithful in heaven and on earth, we pray Thee to fulfil in us, and in all men, the purpose of Thy redeeming love; through Jesus Christ our Lord . . .'

It may well be argued that the position of this prayer in our order of service is wrong, and that it ought to follow the act of communion. I find this note inadequately represented in the new Order of Mass, though it is alluded to in the third and fourth Eucharistic Prayers, which, I understand, are based on Eastern sources.

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