

FACTS SPEAK

Reality is stronger than those who want to bury the Ancient Rite

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This Latin Mass is not to be, at least for a substantial number of prelates. Those who are trying to circumvent Pope Francis in order to convince him to sign a new document that would definitely cut off the chances of the Ancient Rite's survival outside the apostolate

of the Institutes ex-Ecclesia Dei. Whether this document already exists or not is still unclear; instead, there is more certainty that its publication would not be around the corner, nor that it is so obvious that the Pope intends to support this cause; perhaps because of Francis' known dislike for Cardinal Arthur Roche, perhaps because the marginalisation of Catholics loyal to the Holy See would not be good publicity for the Synod under the banner of todos , todos, todos, or perhaps who knows why for some other reason.

The outcome of the recent visit of Msgr. Gilles Wach, Prior General of the Institute of Christ the King High Priest, seems to confirm a certain "protection" of the Pope towards the ex-Ecclesia Dei Institutes, as already occurred with the Fraternity of St. Peter, received in the aftermath of the motu proprio Traditionis Custodes, and confirmed in its apostolate.

In contrast, the Société des Missionnaires de la Miséricorde Divine, a Society of Apostolic Life of diocesan right (Fréjus-Toulon), which is very active in evangelisation, with a particular focus on the Muslim world appears to be in much more difficulty, and today has 34 members. The institute's own statutes provide for the use of pre-Reformation liturgical books, but after Traditionis Custodes their situation seems to have stalled. A **statement** by the Superior General, Abbé Jean-Raphaël Dubrule, complains that one seminarian has been waiting two years for Major Orders and four other seminarians have been "at a standstill" for a year, despite the fact that the critical situation regarding the diocese has been "unblocked."

"Following numerous discussions with the relevant Roman authorities, led by Bishop Touvet [coadjutor bishop of Fréjus-Toulon, ed.], whom I warmly thank for his great support to our community, it seems that the situation is stuck not only for the rite of ordination, but also for the possibility for future priests to be able to celebrate according to the old rite," Dubrule explains. The Holy See's resistance puts the members of the Institute in serious difficulty, who "would no longer be in a position to exercise their ministry within the community and in accordance with the statutes."

It seems that Rome is concerned, if not to say terrified, about the existence of the Ancient Rite and that the current priority of the Dicastery for Divine Worship is to make it disappear from the face of the earth. The same zeal, however, does not seem to characterise the implementation of the conciliar constitution Sacrosanctum Concilium, which, while giving congruous space to national languages, called for the maintenance of the Latin language in the liturgy (cf. SC 36, 54); just as, in perfect continuity with the development of the liturgical tradition, it recognised "Gregorian chant as the proper

chant of the Roman liturgy," to which it should be reserved "the principal place" (SC 116). Yet, Latin and Gregorian no longer feature in the vast majority of liturgical celebrations, including those in cathedrals.

Nor does it appear that such zeal is active in pursuing the continuing and increasingly widespread liturgical abuses, some of them bordering on the unimaginable, that are driving the rightly disgusted Catholic faithful away from the liturgy. It is no mystery that if a priest celebrates mass with his face made up like a clown, he remains untouched, while if the same priest celebrated with the Ancient Rite he would be sent to Timbuktu. But, we care not only about the Ancient Rite; we care just as much that the far more numerous people who attend the Reformed Rite can experience the beauty of the liturgy and not become intoxicated by very clerical liturgical creativity. For reality demonstrates that one exists as well as the other. And a true pastor must take care of both. Without ideological reductionism.

Therefore, we come to the crux of the matter: it is increasingly clear that the Dicastery nominally headed by Roche, but really headed by Bishop Viola, is ill with ideology. It does not want to recognise the serious ailments from which the Roman liturgy suffers today, while it persecutes a Rite that the Church has approved for centuries and that today continues to attract and nourish tens of thousands of faithful worldwide and hundreds of priestly and religious vocations. And the reality cannot be erased by decree. As Dostoevsky wrote in *The Brothers Karamazov*, "facts speak! They shout!" They speak of a young, growing people who are happy to drink from these sources, without using this liturgy in an equally ideological way against the Council, against this or against that. They shout about the need of families for a liturgy and pedagogy of faith anchored in the secular experience of the Church, without preventing others from following other paths.

Ideologies also cry out, but simply because they do not want to leave room for the word that comes from reality. Have Bishop Viola, Cardinal Roche or Cardinal Parolin ever taken the trouble to talk to these people? To try to understand what moves them? Or are they content with a certain "talking cricket" who does nothing but scorn, without even knowing who he is talking about?

Will this dreaded document come out or will it not come out? Will it completely prevent the Ancient Rite or will it preserve Indian reservations? Whatever happens, it will strike a blow, but it will not win the war. Because reality, with its invincible stubbornness, has been able to bury far worse ideological regimes. It is only a matter of time, with time the truth emerges not by its own virtue but because it is the space of divine providence.

Which is not ideological.

That is why, despite forces pushing in the opposite direction, we relaunch again the proposal conceived by Father Louis-Marie de Blignières of an ecclesiastical circumscription, which would allow the faithful to be able to receive the sacraments and live the liturgical life according to the Ancient Rite, while remaining at peace within the Church. And we raise it again especially to the attention of the bishops, so that they support the line of healthy realism. And of a true welcome that, if it is not lived with those at home, how can it claim to open up to those outside? For while it is true that ideology is always eventually buried by reality, it is equally true that in the meantime it reaps countless victims. And we see this day after day in the many souls who, continually affected in their liturgical sensibilities, end up seeking solutions that are not in communion with the Church. The "de Blignières proposal" is not a brilliant idea, nor is it a clever ploy: it is a realistic idea. It simply appeals to a right in Canon law to make use of an already existing legal code, to dilate its spaces and enclose in its arms around thousands of its young (and not so young) children.

"What father among you, if his son asks him for a loaf of bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks him for a fish, will he give him instead of the fish a snake? Or if he asks him for an egg, will he give him a scorpion?"(Luke 11:11-12). What about a son who asks for the sacraments according to a Rite that belongs to the Church?