"And you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that ye be not troubled. For these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." Matthew 24:6

For several months now, rumors have been circulating about Pope Francis and his intentions for the traditional Roman Mass. Though originating in July 2017, nevertheless these supposedly credible "insider-reports" continue to be repeated—and often as fact—thus the importance to address them even now.

The rumors have been of two kinds:

1) Pope Francis intends to rescind *Summorum Pontificum* and allow only the Society of St. Pius X to offer the traditional Mass, but only a) after an agreement had been made between the SSPX and Rome, or b) after Benedict XVI has passed away.

2) Pope Francis is creating a revised or hybrid missal for the traditional Mass that will include elements from the *Novus Ordo Missae*. The SSPX will not initially be required to use this problematic missal edition, but it will be imposed on the priestly society after it has been regularized.

The sources of these contradicting reports have also been of two kinds:

1) From an anonymous and well-informed Vaticanist (supposedly a priest, but as far we actually know, possibly the Papal Gardener).

2) From an overheard conversation in a Vatican corridor between liberal prelates who are known to hate the Immemorial Mass—while this news itself was related by a journalist who also dislikes the traditional Roman Liturgy.

Of course, when these rumors were publicized, panic and dread ensued among a good portion of traditionally and conservative-minded Catholics, which has yet to subside.

But let's take a step back for a moment and examine what is being rumored about and if such assertions are logical, let alone practical. *A fortiori*, let us also consider why we should simply ignore such rumormongering.

To set the background, readers might remember when in late 2012 it was "authoritatively" reported the Vatican was working on a "hybrid missal" for the traditional Mass which was due to appear by mid-2013—and yet, we're still waiting for it five years later! So what can we say of the present-day circulating rumors?

Firstly, it is important to note that the rumors are contradictory and cannot be traced to a

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verifiable source. Furthermore, the supposed informants are themselves antagonistic to the traditional Mass—so can we really trust what they are saying as Gospel truth?

Secondly, in each scenario that Pope Francis is supposedly cooking up, it is stated that the SSPX will be initially exempted from his Mass plans, but after signing a regularization agreement with Rome this priestly society will be expected to comply!

Can anyone who is even remotely familiar with the Society of St. Pius X seriously entertain the idea that their priests (and adhering faithful) would agree—let alone desire—such a "pre-nuptial agreement" with the Vatican? It's positively unthinkable. Furthermore, another rumored scenario has Pope Francis forbidding the traditional Mass to everyone but the priests of the SSPX—again, does such a situation even seem plausible?

And what would become of the priests of the *Ecclesia Dei* Commission groups or even diocesan priests who are genuinely dedicated to the traditional Mass, often for the same theological reasons famously represented by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre? Isn't it more probable that they would either a) simply ignore this unlawful papal command, or b) "jump ship" either to function as "independent priests" or even into the arms of the SSPX! Pope Francis is certainly smart enough to consider these outcomes, thus would he actually risk them?

As for the supposed forthcoming "hybrid missal", examination of this point will have to be delayed until my next piece on this topic. But suffice it to say for the moment (and with the authority of experience in liturgical printing), that such a project is rather impractical, not only from a manufacturing standpoint, but even a financial one, let alone in enforcing its acceptance.

Another important facet to these "Mass rumors" needs to be mentioned before concluding this segment: the ongoing disinformation campaign being waged against the Traditional Movement. For over a decade I have observed how the radicals (whether inside or outside the Vatican) have cleverly spun the rumor mill and craftily-planted stories in the news that cast Tradition in a negative light. Upon closer examination, the methods being employed are strangely reminiscent of Cold War intelligence tactics of sowing fear, doubts, and internal division within the Traditionalist Movement.

Thus, when hearing of such "Mass rumors" we should avoid becoming Chicken Littles who panic that "the end is near" (again). Rather, we should continue to place our hope and confidence in Almighty God—"*Qui fecit caelum et terram*"—Who has upheld and protected the traditional Roman Mass during the last 50 years of the liturgical crisis.

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