Editor's Note: In view of our conference this coming weekend (May 3-5, 2019) — "The New Mass: Fifty Years of Problems" — CFN is pleased to offer the following review of two important books published in France. The reviewer, Professor Roberto de Mattei, is one of the leading voices in the cause for Tradition and Catholic resistance in the world, and has recently published a new book himself entitled, *Apologia for Tradition* (Angelus Press, 2019).

Stay tuned to the CFN website and social media pages for conference updates over the weekend.

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Fifty years ago, on April 3, 1969, the new Mass of Paul VI was promulgated, the *Novus Ordo Missae*. Abbé Claude Barthe, one of the sharpest contemporary students of the problems of the Church, has recently published a historical synthesis not only of the liturgical reform but also of the opposition which it has encountered (*La Messe de Vatican II. Dossier historique,* Via Romana, Versailles 2018, 306 pages). His study deserves to be read alongside another book (*Le droit de la messe romaine,* Publications du Courrier de Rome, Versailles 2018, 310 pages) which gathers the writings of Abbé Raymond Dulac (1903-1987), an indomitable protagonist of the Catholic resistance against the new liturgy.

The Liturgical Movement

Beginning with the period after the First World War, a liturgical movement developed in Europe which had the intention of starting a process of "purification" of the Roman Liturgy and bringing the faithful into "active participation" in divine worship. The centers of the movement were: in Belgium, the abbey of Mont-Cèsar, and also the abbey of Chevetogne, where the figure of Dom Lambert Beauduin stood out; in Germany, the Benedictine Abbey of Maria Laach; in Austria, the abbey of Canons Regular of Klosternbeurg; in France, the *Centre de Pastorale Liturgique* (CPL), with its journal *La Maison-Dieu*; in Italy, the *Rivista liturgica* founded by Don Emanuele Caronti and, later, the *Ephemerides Liturgicae*, directed by Padre Annibale Bugnini. These centers formed "a well-organized pressure group" (p. 49), which exercised a profound influence in successive years. The "experts" met frequently among themselves, both publicly and privately, discussing themes like concelebration, the altars being turned towards the people, the suppression of the sacrificial offertory, and, above all, the introduction of the vernacular languages.

François Mauriac, in the December 25, 1948 edition of *Le Figaro*, told about how he

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assisted at a Mass on Christmas Eve celebrated in French (apart from the Canon) by a worker-priest on a kitchen table covered with a white towel. In September 1956 the "First International Congress on the Liturgy" was held in Assisi, with the participation of 30 experts, 1400 priests, and 80 bishops and abbots, to discuss "the liturgical renewal under the pontificate of Pius XII." But it was only after the death of Pope Pacelli that this talk about renewal became actualized.

On January 25, 1959, only three months after his election, John XXIII announced his intention to convoke the Second Vatican Council. The preparation of the Council was entrusted to ten commissions. The Liturgical Commission was presided over by Cardinal Gaetano Cicognani, and its secretary was a leading figure of the Liturgical Movement, the Lazarist Fr. Annibale Bugnini, a Curial official with a great capacity for organization and for work. Within the commission, however, there was a deep division between the two tendencies which would confront each other in the Council: the progressive and the conservative. John XXIII, who distanced himself from the progressives in the liturgical field, promulgated the Apostolic Constitution *Veterum Sapientia* on February 22, 1961, which was a firm and unexpected response to those who advocated introducing the vernacular into the liturgy. In this document, Pope Roncalli emphasized the importance of the use of Latin, "the living language of the Church," and recommended that those who aspired to the priesthood, before they began ecclesiastical studies, would be "instructed in the Latin language with great care and with a rational method by experienced teachers for a convenient period of time" (n. 3).

On the same day, the Pope named Cardinal Arcadio M. Larraona as president of the preparatory commission, replacing Cardinal Cicognani, who had died on February 5, 1961. If this choice of Larraona – an eminent Spanish canonist and a conservative – was significant, even more so was the replacement of Bugnini with Fr. Ferdinando Antonelli as secretary of the commission in October 1962, just before the opening of the Council. John XXIII did not succeed, however, in stopping the liturgical movement, which was so well-organized. When Vatican II opened, all of the preparatory schemas were thrown out, with the exception of *De Liturgia*, which was the fruit of the work of the one commission dominated by progressives.

Sacrosanctum Concilium – Promulgation and Implementation

Abbé Barthe follows the Conciliar liturgical debate all the way to its outcome: the promulgation of the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* on December 3, 1963, the first text ratified by the assembly, by which the Council Fathers accepted that the Roman Liturgy

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would be “reorganized and reconsidered”.[1] Only one month after the promulgation of this document, its practical application began. Paul VI, who had succeeded John XXIII on June 21, 1963, had a very different tendency than his predecessor. He created the *Consilium ad exsequendam Constitutionem de sacra Liturgia*, which Abbé Barthe defines as a true and proper “constituent assembly” on the liturgy.[2] At the head of this new organism he placed two progressive prelates: Cardinal Giacomo Lercaro as president and Fr. Annibale Bugnini as secretary, returned from the quarantine in which John XXIII had placed him. Paul VI gave the *Consilium* the task of revising the liturgical books (the Missal, Breviary, Ritual, Pontifical) and implementing the reform regarding the more active participation of the faithful, such as the use of vernacular languages. Article 54 of the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, combined with article 40 relative to the role of episcopal conferences, had in fact given to the episcopal conferences the right to introduce the vernacular in the celebration of the Mass.

The first phase of the reform took place between 1964 and 1968 and came to its culmination in the Constitution *Missale Romanum* promulgated by Paul VI in the Consistory of April 28, 1969. One of the most insightful parts of Abbé Barthe’s book is dedicated to a theological analysis of the new Missal, which is shown to be a formless and polyvalent ritual form.[3] In fact, “in a general context of the relativization of the dogmatic rule, which was the context in which the great ecclesial mutation of Vatican II took place, this distinctly more informal character of worship contributed to the weakening of its character as a vehicle of the profession of faith”.[4]

Resistance to the *Novus Ordo*

In the last four chapters of his book, the French theologian follows the battle over Latin between 1964 and 1969 and the battle over the *Novus Ordo* in the years which followed. Beginning in 1965, the year in which the vernacular was introduced into the liturgy, there was a strong opposition against the liturgical reform which showed itself in the foundation of the international association *Una Voce* for the safeguarding of the Latin-Gregorian liturgy. In England, in France, in Italy, protests were organized by intellectuals, artists, and musicians. At the beginning of February 1965, Michel de Saint-Pierre’s book *Les Nouveaux Prêtres* was a resounding success. As a result, the French writer founded the *Credo* movement. In England, Evelyn Waugh was one of the founders of the Latin Mass Society; in Italy, the writer Tito Casini made a sensation in 1967 with *La Tunica stracciata*, an explicit reference to the tunic of Christ being torn apart by the schisms and heresies of the post-Conciliar period.

After the promulgation of the *Novus Ordo*, the question was no longer only one of defending

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Latin and chant, but also the theological patrimony which the traditional Mass represented. In April and May 1969, a group of qualified theologians compiled a rigorous critique of the new liturgy entitled *Breve esame critico del Novus ordo Missae* (A Brief Critical Examination of the Novus Ordo Missae). In October 1969, this text was sent to Paul VI accompanied by a letter from Cardinals Alfredo Ottaviani and Antonio Bacci. In this letter, they affirmed that "the *Novus Ordo Missae* […] represents, both as a whole and in its individual parts, a striking departure from the Catholic theology of the Holy Mass, which was formulated in the XXII session of the Council of Trent, which, definitively establishing the 'canons' of the rite, erected an insurmountable barrier against and heresy which would attack the integrity of the Mystery."

Abbè Barthe follows with historical precision the "great refusal" of the new Mass of Paul VI which was made by many members of both the clergy and the laity, beginning with the *Breve Esame critico* of Cardinals Ottaviani and Bacci. As part of this "nebula of opposition" in France, Barthe recalls Abbè Georges de Nantes, with his *Contre-Rèforme Catholique*,andJean Madiran, the director of the journal *Itinéraires;* in Brazil, Arnaldo Vidigal Xavier da Silveira; in Italy, Romano Amerio. In addition to these intellectuals, naturally there needs to be added the priests who conducted their opposition "in the trenches," creating a network of traditional Masses, from the abbeys of Fontgambault and Barroux to the Fraternity of Saint Pius X, founded by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, who linked opposition to the liturgical reform with opposition to the Second Vatican Council. The spectacular occupation of the Church of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet in Paris by Msgr. Ducaud-Bourget and the faithful on Sunday, February 26, 1976, was an event whose importance Abbè Barthe justly emphasizes. The decision of the Minister of the Interior of Giscard d'Estaing, Michel Poniatowski, not to intervene was a sign that the Catholic electorate was largely favorable to allowing the traditionalist movement to live and express itself.

Summorum Pontificum – Vindication for the Traditional Mass

The *Novus Ordo* of Paul VI was promulgated to replace the ancient rite, but on July 7, 2007, the motu proprio *Summorum Pontificum* of Benedict XVI established that the ancient Mass had never been abrogated. Since then, the use of the Tridentine Missal is no longer a concession but the right of every priest, and in the space of a little over ten years the number of places where the traditional liturgy is offered has redoubled, just as the number of faithful who attend traditional Masses has proportionally grown. The motu proprio of Benedict XVI has also produced a flowering of works by liturgists, theologians, and

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historians of the liturgy with a "Ratzingerian" orientation. In the *de facto* co-existence which was created between the two rites, the ancient Roman rite, although the minority position, appears capable of an attraction which the Mass of Paul VI lacks. The pontificate of Pope Francis, which Abbè Barthe considers as the completion of Vatican II, has not succeeded in seeing a reversal of this tendency so as to favor the new liturgy. The final pages of his book are dedicated to the "unfruitful search for a third way"[5] and to the "impossible restoration",[6] that is, to the failure of the so-called "hermeneutic of continuity" which has proven to be incapable of stopping the theological and liturgical disintegration of our times.

The Legacy of Abbé Dulac

The reading of the study of Abbè Barthe, preceded by an ample preface written by Abbè Grégoire Celier, offers a final confirmation for those who are convinced that the path to be followed is the one that was clearly indicated by the "resistors" of the 1970s. Among these is counted Abbè Raymond Dulac, one of the best fruits of the 20th century Roman theological school. Born in Sète, France in 1903, Abbè Dulac was a student at the French seminary in Rome directed by Fr. Henri Le Floch during the years that Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre studied there. He was ordained a priest in 1926 and obtained a doctorate in philosophy and theology and a license in canon law. During the Second Vatican Council, together with Abbè Victor Berto, another of his fellow students from the French seminary, he wrote a work providing precious theological counsel to the group of Council Fathers who opposed progressivisim, above all, when they dealt with the theme of collegiality. He was one of the founders of the journal *La Pensée Catholique* and, subsequently, a brilliant collaborator of the journals *Courrier de Rome* e *Itinéraires*. He passed the last years of his life assisting the Carmelite sisters of Draguignan, where he died on January 18, 1987. His funeral was celebrated by Abbè Paul Aulagnier, then the superior of French Province of the Fraternity of Saint Pius X.

Beginning in 1967, Abbè Dulac addressed the question of the legitimacy of resistance against the liturgical "*aggiornamento*" initiated by Paul VI after Vatican II. Abbè Dulac considered the new *Ordo Missae* to be not a reform but a "revolution," and in July 1969 he expressed an absolute refusal of the new Mass, basing himself on canon law and moral theology. He wrote: "We have simply chosen to refuse without contesting, to resist without disobeying, to avoid following a command in order to submit to a higher obligation. All of this without 'free examination' but following the objective rules and practices found in the most classic manuals and (more importantly) in the lives of the saints".[7]

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Novus Ordo is "Polyvalent"

On September 25, 1969, the French priest explained in *Courrier de Rome* that the Mass of Paul VI is "polyvalent": it can be accepted both by Catholics as well as by Protestants, by those who believe in the Real Presence as well as by those who do not. On January 5, 1970, he presented an analysis of the "self-demolition of the Mass" in an important document, "*Consultazione canonica sul valore obbligatorio del nuovo* Ordo Missae [A Canonical Consultation on the Obligatory Value of the new *Ordo Missae*]," which was destined to become, even to the present day, a point of reference for those who follow Tradition. In this study, Abbè Dulac reiterates that, considering the constitution of Paul VI only in its canonical form, it does not obligate any priest to celebrate the new Mass nor any of the faithful to assist at it. In another article on January 25, 1970, he explains: "We have never said, nor will we ever say, and we condemn with all of our strength those who say that the new *Ordo Missae* of Paul VI is heretical – because this precise and terrible qualification requires rigorous conditions of both the dogmatic and moral order. But we have said and we will continue to say: this *Ordo* is equivocal, to the point of 'polyvalence,' with all that these two adjectives entail, both indeterminate and dangerous in practice."

On September 10, 1970, Abbè Dulac further clarified: "We have never said that the new Mass is heretical. Unfortunately it is, one might say, even worse. It is equivocal, it is flexible in many different senses. Flexible to the will. The individual will thus becomes the rule and measure of things. Formal and clear heresy acts like a dagger. Equivocation acts like a slow poison. Heresy attacks a precise article of dogma. Equivocation undermines the *habitus* of faith and thus weakens all dogmas. One becomes a formal heretic only by willing it. Equivocation instead is able to demolish the faith of a man unbeknownst to him. Heresy affirms what dogma denies or denies what it affirms. Equivocation destroys the faith just as radically, by refraining from either affirming or denying, by turning revealed certainty into personal opinion" (p. 252).[8] The original sin of the new rite is that of "having wanted to create a *passe-partout* 'Mass' which can be celebrated either by a Catholic or by a Protestant".[9]

In April 1972, Abbè Dulac published a synthesis of his writings in the journal *Itinéraires* entitled "*Saint Pius V's Bull of Promulgation of the Restored Roman Missal*." In this article the French canonist makes a detailed analysis of the Bull of Saint Pius V and of the *Novus Ordo* of Paul VI, reiterating another time that the Tridentine Missal was never juridically abrogated and that it may be licitly celebrated by every priest. In his "*Counsels for a Respectful Resistance*" he writes: "Rule one. Apart from its doctrinal content and considering only the juridical aspects of its publication, the Missal of Paul VI cannot be affirmed to be obligatory, of carrying a strictly juridical obligation. […] Rule two. Saint Pius

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V's Bull *Quo Primum Tempore* was not abrogated in its totality by Paul VI's Constitution *Missale Romanum* of April 3, 1969".[10]

A few years later, the Italian writer Tito Casini would refer explicitly to Abbè Dulac, writing: "…the new Mass is not heretical but it is perhaps worse, it is equivocal and flexible," because "fog is, for those who travel, more dangerous than the dark…"[11]

Conclusion

The pages of Abbè Dulac are of extraordinary relevance today. They demonstrate how the roots of the evils which are afflicting the Church reach back at least to the 1960s, the years of the Council and the post-Council. Paul VI, in his discourse to the seminary of Lombardy on December 7, 1968, used the unprecedented expression of the "self-demolition of the Church." Faced with this process of self-demolition, numerous Catholics, both clergy and lay, rose up on their feet to defend the Faith of the Church. Abbè Raymond Dulac was one of these. The "hermeneutic of continuity" in style today does not have the clarity and intellectual vigor of the arguments made by defenders of the Tradition like Abbè Dulac, whose writings merit to be read and meditated on, not only in order to honor their memory but also to nourish today's Catholic resistance, which is the daughter of that of fifty years ago, and which is fighting against the same enemy.

Translated by Giuseppe Pellegrino.

The articles and conferences by Professor Roberto de Mattei can all be found on https://www.patreon.com/lepantofoundation.

Notes

[1] Abbé Claude Barthe, *La Messe de Vatican II. Dossier historique* (Versailles: Via Romana, 2018), p. 94.

[2] *Ibid*., pp. 95-98.

[3] *Ibid*., pp. 137-193.

[4] *Ibid*., p. 153.

[5] *Ibid*., pp. 261-269.

[6] *Ibid*., pp. 273-288.

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[7] Abbé Raymond Dulac, *Le droit de la messe romaine* (Versailles: Publications du Courrier de Rome, 2018), pp. 114-115.

[8] *Ibid*., p. 252.

[9] *Ibid*., p. 256.

[10] *Ibid*., p. 288-289.

[11] Tito Casini, *Il Fumo di Satana: verso l'ultimo scontro* [The Smoke of Satan: Towards the Final Clash], Ed. Il Carro di San Giovanni, Firenze 1976, p. 140.

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