

What's In a Name?

Having previously explored the doctrinal and historical legacies of the traditional Mass in the [first](#) and [second](#) parts of this series, I now come to a primary point of my original conference, the title or name of the City of Rome's rite of the Holy Sacrifice: the Roman Mass.

Perhaps by now you have noticed that I have been consistently using the title of "Roman Mass" throughout the series, while avoiding other more frequently used terms for identifying the traditional form. The reason is because, as a name conveys an intrinsic meaning, it is thereby important—and in some cases, even imperative—to use correct terminology.

Unfortunately, the proper and official title of the Roman Mass has been habitually forgotten, and even discarded during the post-conciliar liturgical crisis. As we shall soon see, however, the term "Roman Mass" (or *Missa Romanus* in Latin) is not only the official but also the most appropriate title, for historical, doctrinal and cultural reasons.

During the two millennia of the Roman Church, many different terms have been used to refer to the rite of Holy Mass, from the ancient Greek terms of *Eucharistia* (the giving of thanks), *Synaxis* (the assembly) and *Leitourgia* (the rendering of public service), to the Latin one of *Fractio Panis* (the breaking of bread).

Eventually in the West—or Latin Church—the term *missa* became the most common term associated with the ritual act of the Holy Sacrifice.[\[1\]](#) The Latin *Sancta Missa* (Holy Mass) was itself curiously derived from the announcement of the deacon, "*Ite, missa est*", which in the primitive ecclesiastical era bid the catechumens to depart from the assembly of the baptized prior to the celebration of the holy mysteries.

This word "*missa*" would eventually be used to commonly describe the Eucharistic rites in the West, and thereby the term *Missa Romanus* or Roman Mass was used to indicate the form of the Holy Sacrifice celebrated by the Bishop of Rome. By extension, the term *missa* was even applied to the primary liturgical book that was developed for the celebration of Mass in the West—the altar missal—and thereby in our case, the *Missale Romanum* or Roman Missal.[\[2\]](#)



As demonstrated in the previous parts of this series, the significance of the name “Roman” is not merely limited to its place of origin (the city of Rome), but more crucially to a heritage of doctrinal orthodoxy, an unbroken and venerable tradition from the Apostles of Rome, an embodiment of *romanitas*, and intimate attachment to the Holy See. Furthermore, in the context of the post-conciliar crisis, the Roman Mass has become a banner of the Catholic Faith. Therefore, we can see how the title “Roman Mass” is truly the most concise and defining term for this rite and thereby should be favored above all others.

“Latin Mass” and Other Inaccurate Terms

At this point, we need to examine and critique some inaccurate terms commonly used to refer to the traditional Roman Mass. These names were invented in the wake of the Second Vatican Council and the introduction of the *Novus Ordo Missae* of Pope Paul VI to distinguish the “Old Mass” from the “New Mass”. Unfortunately, these terms are somewhat problematic as they neither sufficiently describe the Roman Mass nor encompass what this liturgical rite embodies, as previously demonstrated.

The most ubiquitous term is “Latin Mass” or “Traditional Latin Mass” (also popularly abbreviated as “TLM”). First of all, this title fails to distinguish which liturgy of the Latin Rites is being cited, as it could even be mistaken for the *Novus Ordo Missae*... which is also Latin (as are the official texts of the New Mass)! Secondly, it focuses the justification for the traditional Mass on the use of language.^[3] While the issue of sacred language is indeed an important one, nevertheless, the primary issues are doctrine and adherence to Tradition.

Other terms such as “Tridentine Mass”, “Mass of St. Pius V”, or “Mass of John XXIII” are historically inaccurate, since neither the Council of Trent, nor St. Pius V, let alone John XXIII, composed the Roman Mass. Instead, they simply reformed the existing rite. This must also be said about the use of “Gregorian Rite”, for while St. Gregory the Great did make the last major revisions to the Roman Canon (comprising the most venerable parts of the Mass), he certainly did not create it. Of course, equally imprecise are the titles of “*Usus Antiquior*” and “Classical Rite”.

But *a fortiori*, a name that should be firmly rejected is “Extraordinary Form” while simultaneously refusing to refer to the New Mass as the “Ordinary Form”. This novel nomenclature, which Pope Benedict XVI used in *Summorum Pontificum*^[4] is nothing less than applying the Modernist error of a “hermeneutic of continuity” to liturgical matters, because as we shall see later, the *Novus Ordo* cannot be considered as the Roman Mass.

Furthermore, referring to the New Mass as the “ordinary form” denies the juridical reality (at least *de jure*, if not *de facto*) that the traditional Roman Mass is truly the ordinary rite of the Latin Church, and not the Consilium’s liturgical invention. The veracity of this canonical situation has been proven by legal examination^[5] and the fact that *Quo Primum* was never abrogated, as verified by Pope Benedict XVI in *Summorum Pontificum*, which means that it continues to have force of law today.

The New Mass Is Not the Roman Mass

And finally, it must be stated and briefly explained why the *Novus Ordo Missae* cannot be considered the Roman Mass through its failure to fulfill the latter’s requisite characteristics.

In the first and most crucial matter, the *Novus Ordo* lacks doctrinal orthodoxy, the greatest hallmark of the traditional Roman Mass. The New Mass has an ecumenical and heterodox nature, an objective of the Consilium and even of Pope Paul VI.^[6]

This ecumenical goal was accomplished with the assistance of six heretical Protestant ministers to create the New Mass,^[7] resulting in the minimization, mutation, and omission of Catholic doctrine in its texts (as opposed to merely a bad translation). The theological

heterodoxy even went so far as to include a heretical—that is, Protestant—definition of the Mass in the first version of the General Instruction.[\[8\]](#)



Left: Archbishop Annibale Bugnini (1912-1982), Secretary and driving force of the Concilium, the liturgical commission which created the *Novus Ordo Missae*. Right: The Six Protestant ministers who served as consultants to the Concilium, standing with Pope Paul VI (far right).

These doctrinal issues within the New Mass were immediately decried in September 1970 by means of “The Brief Critical Study of the New Order of the Mass”, more commonly known today as the “[Ottaviani Intervention](#)”:

“...the *Novus Ordo* represents, both as a whole and in its details, a striking departure from the Catholic theology of the Mass as it was formulated in Session XXII of the Council of Trent. The “canons” of the rite definitively fixed at that time provided an insurmountable barrier to any heresy directed against the integrity of the Mystery. ...

It is evident that the *Novus Ordo* has no intention of presenting the Faith as taught by the Council of Trent, to which, nonetheless, the Catholic conscience is bound forever.”



Left: Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani (1890-1979), Secretary of the Holy Office (1959-1966) and later Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (1966-1968), who publicly endorsed the “Brief Critical Study of the New Order of Mass” by a group of Roman theologians. Right: Cardinal Antonio Bacci (1885-1971), Secretary of Briefs to Princes (1931-1960), who likewise endorsed the “Brief Critical Study”.

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Thirty-four years later, the above statement was reinforced by Cardinal Alfons Stickler in his foreword to the 2004 reprinting of the Ottaviani Intervention:

“The analysis of the *Novus Ordo* made by these two cardinals has lost none of its value nor, unfortunately, of its relevance.... The results of the reform are considered by many today to be devastating. It was to the credit of Cardinals Ottaviani and Bacci that they discovered very quickly that the change of the rites led to a fundamental change of doctrine.”

And whereas in the past, Protestants condemned the Roman Mass as “Papist”, an “abomination”, or containing “false notions of sacrifice”, many not only praised the publication of the *Novus Ordo Missae* but even adopted it themselves![\[9\]](#) Is this not proof enough of its heterodoxy?

How, then, can we consider the New Mass to be the “Roman Mass”, or another form of the same rite (as Pope Benedict XVI stated in *Summorum Pontificum*), when its texts contradict the dogmas declared during the Council of Trent, which every Catholic is required to believe?

Furthermore, the *Novus Ordo* is also a break with Tradition,[\[10\]](#) was formed with an anti-Roman spirit[\[11\]](#) and the error of antiquarianism[\[12\]](#) condemned by Pope Pius XII in his liturgical encyclical *Mediator Dei*.

Conclusion

When we add all of these points up—and more could be said on each one—how can we consider the *Novus Ordo Missae* as the legitimate successor and namesake of the immemorial Roman Mass?

Hopefully, then, we can see the importance of referring to the traditional Mass as the “Roman Mass” for all that it encompasses, while also employing this term as a banner for the traditional liturgy which represents the Roman Catholic Church’s authentic liturgical tradition, purity of doctrine, and attachment to the authentic Magisterium.

The English traditionalist apologist, Michael Davies, declared in the 1990’s that the Immemorial Mass is the “future” and those attached to it are “going to win!” His foresight has been proven correct and now we must carry on this struggle for the victory of the “Mass of All Time”.

Stay tuned, therefore, for the fourth and final installment of this series, which will offer practical advice on how we can assist in promoting the traditional liturgy.

Notes

[\[1\]](#) It is interesting to note that the Council of Trent uses other terms in its canons concerning the Roman Mass, such as *Ecclesiae Romanae Ritum* (Rite of the Roman Church) and *Ordo missae secundum ritum Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae* (Order of Mass according to the Rite of the Holy Roman Church).

[2] For more information about the development of the altar missal, see my article at *The Remnant*, "[The Uniqueness of the Altar Missal](#)".

[3] It should be noted that the term "Latin Mass" was coined to defend the traditional Mass offered in Latin instead of the vernacular, which began as early as 1963 and was already widespread throughout the Western Church by the introduction of the *Novus Ordo Missae* in 1969. This was also the cause of the founding of Una Voce International in 1964.

[4] While Catholics should greatly appreciate Pope Benedict clarification that *Quo Primum* was never abolished (i.e., the traditional Mass was never legally forbidden), nonetheless, *Summorum Pontificum* does remain a compromised document (see [here](#) for further analysis).

[5] For example, there is the canonical study of Fr. Raymond Dulac published in *The Remnant* in 1970. This legal argument is based upon the fact that the Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum* of April 1969 lacked the necessary wording to actually promulgate the *Novus Ordo Missae* as well as to abolish the prior law of *Quo Primum*. Paradoxically, even Archbishop Annibale Bugnini advocated to Pope Paul VI that the traditional Mass should continue to be allowed! For more on this point, see Yves Chiron, [Annibale Bugnini: Reformer of the Liturgy](#).

[6] See Michael Davies book, *Pope Paul's New Mass* ([available from Angelus Press](#)), for more details about the creative forces behind the *Novus Ordo Missae*. But as an example, Paul VI told his confidant, Jean Guilton, that he wanted the New Mass to resemble a Calvinist service.

[7] For more on this point, see my article at *The Remnant*, "[What About Those Six Protestants and the New Mass?](#)"

[8] This heretical definition in the General Instruction of the New Mass was discovered and protested in person to Pope Paul VI by Cardinal Charles Journet, a Swiss theologian and author. The first edition of the *Ordo Missae* of the New Mass was subsequently withdrawn, corrected and republished. Yet this corrective action did not resolve the theological deficiencies of the *Novus Ordo Missae*, which remain to this day.

[9] For some citations, see "[What About Those Six Protestants and the New Mass?](#)" as well Davies' book, *Pope Paul's New Mass*.

[10] As declared by the liturgist Fr. Louis Bouyer during a 1974 audience with Pope Paul VI when he resigned his commission with the Consilium (see [here](#)). Fr. Bouyer's *Memoirs* also

make for illuminative reading about the Consilium's inner workings.

[11] The attitude of “anything but Roman” was quite strong among various members of the Consilium and was practically manifested by a fixation on replacing more-developed Western—or Roman—practices (e.g., genuflecting to the Blessed Sacrament) with earlier (and thereby less-developed) practices found in the Eastern Rites. This is also an example of implementing the error of antiquarianism (see note 11 below).

[12] The error of antiquarianism was condemned by Pope Pius XII in his 1947 encyclical on the sacred liturgy, *Mediator Dei*, §61-64. The full text of this document can be found at [Romanitas Press](#). In the context of the New Mass, this error was used to foster ecumenism with the Protestants by employing theologically-less-developed liturgical texts, such as from the so-called Liturgy of St. Hippolytus.