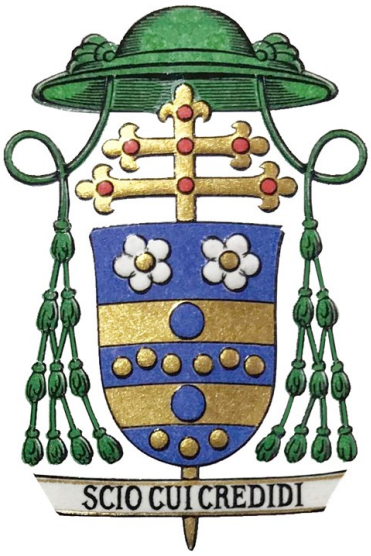

ABSOLVE, DOMINE

Homily of Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò in morte Papæ Benedicti XVI

Dies iræ, dies illa, dies tribulationis et angustiæ,
dies calamitatis et miseriæ, dies tenebrarum et caliginis,
dies nebulæ et turbinis, dies tubæ et clangoris
super civitates munitas et super angulos excelsos.

Zeph 1:15-16

Bitter is the day of the Lord! Even a brave man shouts it. A day of wrath is that day, a day of tribulation and anguish, a day of calamity and misery, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of cloud and whirlwind, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fortified cities and against the high towers. So speaks the Prophet Zephaniah.

Absolve, Domine. Forgive, O Lord. We sing these words in the Tract of the Mass of the Dead, whether for Popes or simple clerics, for those who are rich or those who are poor, for those who are wise or those who are simple. *Et gratia tua illis succurente, mereantur evadere judicium ultionis, et lucis æternæ beatitudine perfrui*. And with the help of Your grace, may they merit to pass through the final judgment and rejoice in the beatitude of eternal light.

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Let us address this same prayer to the Divine Majesty as we celebrate the Holy Mass in suffrage for the soul of Joseph Ratzinger, who was Roman Pontiff until February 28, 2013. And as this Mass asks for mercy towards the deceased, we entrust his soul to the mercy of God, who knows all things and who scrutinizes the secrets of men's hearts. As far as what he did and said during his long life, and in particular after ascending to the Throne of Peter, we want to recall that providential act of truth and justice with which he recognized full legitimacy to the Apostolic Liturgy, promulgating the Motu Proprio *Summorum Pontificum*. The good that the liberalization of the Ancient Rite has done to the Church will weigh upon the scale of judgment of soul which we see in many depictions of the Archangel Saint Michael. Thanks to it, a multitude of faithful and priests — among whom we also number ourselves — have been able to know the inestimable treasure of doctrine and spirituality which unfortunate choices had made inaccessible for fifty years; thanks to it an overflowing river of graces, which no one will be able to stop, has poured out — and continues to pour out still today — on the Church and on the world.

In contemplating the rubble that survives the conciliar devastation, I do not dare to think what the present situation of the Church would be without the Mass of Saint Pius V. And yet, in the same Motu Proprio *Summorum Pontificum*, one cannot fail to note the precarious structure adopted by the distinguished theologian Ratzinger: the *thesis* of Catholic orthodoxy (and of the Traditional Mass), the *antithesis* of the Modernist heresy (and of the Montinian Mass), and the *synthesis* of Vatican II (and of the co-existence of two forms of the same rite). Unfortunately, the *delicta juventutis* were never formally disavowed, even if the horrors of the last ten years have almost overshadowed them.

We can only pray fervently that in the near future there may be accomplished that complete *restitutio* of the Ancient Rite which puts an end to the decades of abuse, manipulation, adulteration, and persecution which have been made all the more ferocious during the Bergoglian era.

Si iniquitates observaveris Domine, Domine, quis sustinebit? Who can withstand God's judgment, if only we consider our faults? No one. And yet in His mercy, God, Who is a Father to us, and Who loves us even to the point of giving His Only-Begotten Son for our salvation, deigns to look at the good we have done with greater attention than He gives to our shortcomings. It is as if, knowing us to be weak and sinful, He was searching for all the ways to save us from eternal damnation, giving us a thousand opportunities to redeem ourselves. This is true for the least of the faithful as well as for the one who sits on the highest Throne. The consideration of our sin should not lead us to consider ourselves destined to give way and to be exempt from punishment, but rather it ought to spur us on to place all of our trust in the One Who gives strength (Phil 4 :13). And this is also true for the

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one whom Providence chose to govern the Church.

Animated by this trust, Pope Benedict XVI sought in some way to repair the terrible wound which one of his Predecessors had caused to the ecclesial body; a wound that was healing, but which the maneuvers of the Enemy and his acolytes seeks to keep open, nullifying *Summorum Pontificum* even in the face of the undeniable spiritual goods that it brings to souls — and, indeed, precisely because of these infinite graces, because they represent the most scorching defeat of the secularized and worldly spirit of the conciliar ideology.

And if the reformed rite has cancelled the *Dies Iræ* from the Requiem Mass, replacing it with *Alleluias*, we find in the Ancient Mass reasons for hope and dignified suffrage for the soul of a man whom the Lord wanted as His Vicar. In this Rite, we hear the voice of the Spouse imploring mercy, forgiveness, indulgence, absolution, remission. It is the voice of the Bride who, acknowledging the sins of her children, presents them, whom the Divine Son redeems with His own Sacrifice, before the Eternal Father. Therefore, may the soul of Pope Benedict find the place of refreshment, light, and peace, which we ask for him in the *Memento* of the Roman Canon.

In the blessed glory of Heaven, or in the purifying flames of Purgatory, Pope Benedict XVI will be able to pray for us and for the entire Church, finally knowing *facie ad faciem* that Divine Truth that this earthly exile reveals only obscurely. His prayers join ours and those of the holy souls as well as those of the Heavenly Court, imploring the Divine Majesty for an end to the present tribulations, and in particular for the defeat and expulsion of the sect of heretics and corrupt men that afflicts and eclipses the Holy Church of God.

And so may it be.

5 January MMXXIII
Vigil of the Epiphany of the Lord

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