

Here are some conclusions we can draw from our discussion about “the forgotten book” :

FACT #1: Good Catholics would prefer to believe the reformers were in total agreement about everything and mandated everything clearly. In fact, chaos reigned. Cardinal Antonelli has explained that the votes of Consilium members were neither counted nor recorded (!) and he tried in vain repeatedly to force a decision as to whether a simple majority or 2/3 majority was required to pass resolutions.

FACT #2: Pope Paul VI set up the Consilium in opposition to the Sacred Congregation of Rites. This situation caused much confusion, especially when certain statements were made by members of the Consilium and accepted as if they were liturgical law.

FACT#3: Many decrees from the 1970 period were imprecise about important things. For example, certain decrees refer explicitly to “Offertory antiphons” printed in the 1970 Sacramentary (which don’t exist) and others treat the 1970 Missal antiphons as if they are identical to the *Graduale* antiphons (they’re not).

FACT #4: The liturgy was altered so hastily during in the 1970 period we should not be surprised that many priests did not notice the differences between the 1970 Missal antiphons and the 1974 Gradual antiphons (which correspond to the 1970 *Ordo Cantus Missae*).

FACT #5: Many bishops were uncomfortable with the notion of “*alius cantus congruus*” — that anyone can replace any antiphon at will. Even Archbishop Bugnini had a difficult time “sweeping this fact under the rug” in his book:

Bugnini, pages 902 - 903: There was full discussion of no. 36 (no. 32 in the final text), which allowed the chants of the Mass to be replaced by other songs approved by the episcopal conferences. The instruction restricted itself to confirming the indults granted to certain countries for this purpose. Those concerned in these indults, namely, the consultors and members from the German-speaking countries, supported retention of this number; others regarded it as unnecessary because it referred to particular cases; still others thought that the *Graduale Simplex* would handle the situation. The majority, however, saw the pastoral advantage of having other songs besides the psalms for the Proper of the Mass. The paragraph was put to a vote and accepted. It would subsequently play a very important role, because the episcopal conferences would appeal to it as a basis for asking the same indult for their regions. The principle of songs in the vernacular would be extended to the entire Church in the reformed Roman Missal.

Catholics who were worried about the *de facto* destruction of the Roman Rite owing to all this substitution wrote to the Sacred Congregation of Rites, and were told not to worry:

Bugnini, page 888: The only thing new in the Constitution is that for sound and unquestionable pastoral reasons it now bestows the rights of citizenship in holy Church on popular religious song, which for that matter is widely recommended in the most recent legislation. We can see no reason why this kind of singing cannot be fostered and coexist peacefully with the traditional musical genres for the glory of God and the fuller participation of the Christian people in the worship of the Lord.

As we have seen, however, there is no question “coexistence” : the whole notion of Propers was destroyed, for all intents and purposes. However, they’re making a comeback!