

It was thought that the campaign being conducted by more fanatical traditionalist groups would gradually die out. This did not happen, and so any concession became impossible.

The only known concession had been made earlier by direct intervention of the Holy See. At an audience of October 29, 1971, Cardinal Heenan had told the Pope of the discomfort of groups of converts and of elderly people who wanted to be able to celebrate Mass according to the old rite on special occasions. The next day the Pope wrote to Father Bugnini in his own hand:

I pass on to the respected Father Annibale Bugnini, secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship, the enclosed letter of Cardinal John Heenan, Archbishop of Westminster, which was followed by a verbal request at an audience on the 29th of this month. I ask you, in agreement with the Cardinal Prefect, to give the due answer before the Cardinal leaves Rome at the end of the Synod.

The Congregation must have already drawn up instructions for such cases. . . . In any event, I think, in agreement with the Cardinal Archbishop, that a favorable answer, cast in the proper formulas, should be given to the first request, and to the second as well, wherever special circumstances justify the concession. The Cardinal who is making the petition deserves every respect and confidence.

My thanks, prayers, and blessing. Paul VI, Supreme Pontiff. October 30, 1971.

Thus on November 5, 1971, permission was granted to individual bishops of England and Wales "to permit some groups of the faithful to participate on special occasions in a Mass celebrated with the rites and texts of the earlier Roman Missal that was published by decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites on January 27, 1965, as modified in the instruction of May 4, 1967."

The requests had to be inspired by true devotion, and the permissions given in a way that would not bring harm to the community of the faithful. Since the Eucharist is a bond of unity, the concession could not be allowed to become a cause of disunity.<sup>42</sup>

## 6. *A Binding Missal*

In their propaganda against the new Roman Missal, traditionalist groups not only brought doctrinal accusations but argued that use of the book was optional and not obligatory. Bishops asked the Holy See on a number of occasions to clarify this point not only against the traditionalists but for the peace of conscience of many of the faithful.

At a plenary meeting on November 15, 1972, the Congregation for Divine Worship asked itself whether it might not be time to seek a juridical answer from the Pontifical Commission for the Interpretation of the Conciliar Documents. This recourse was proposed as indeed not necessary

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42. The concessoary letter urged that prudence and reserve be exercised in granting the faculty and that any grant not be given too much publicity. This perhaps displeased Cardinal Heenan, who wanted to publish the concessoary letter. The English bishops would, in fact, show prudence and skill in using the faculty for the spiritual good of some groups of the faithful while continuing the liturgical renewal for the community as a whole; see the regulations they set down when the English translation of the Missal was published: "The New English Missal," *Not* 11 (1975) 143-44.

It seems that when Cardinal Heenan died, attempts were made to declare the indult no longer operative. It is certain that the concession, which the Pope granted in view of the special situation and mentality in England, caused difficulties: for the Holy See and the bishops of other countries, who were urged to obtain the same faculty; for the Congregation for Divine Worship, which the most intransigent rebuked for the grant; for its secretary, since the Pope had decided to turn to him rather than to the prefect.