

Antonelli's Personal Notes on the Development of the Reform (1968-1971)

In a notebook entitled *Note sulla Riforma Liturgica*, covering the period from 1968 to 1971, we find Antonelli's comments on the final stages of the liturgical reform which had been approved by the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship. Fr. Antonelli's great preoccupation with this phase of the reform is immediately evident. Clearly, he had come to doubt the utility of the reform itself. In the Preface to the notebook, he noted:

The day before yesterday, July 23, 1968, while speaking with Msgr. Giovanni Benelli, *Sostituto* of the Secretariat of State, I explained my concern for the liturgical reform, which is becoming more chaotic and deviant. I particularly noted:

1. Up to the Council, liturgical law was regarded as something sacred, for many it no longer exists. Everyone now takes it that they are authorized to do what they like, and many of the young do just that;
2. The Mass is an especially painful case. Masses in homes are becoming increasingly frequent, as are group Masses, often connected with common meals, for example, supper;
3. Concerning the Sacrament of Penance, a work of disintegration has begun;
4. I noted that part of the cause for the state of things must be related to the system of experiments. The Pope granted a faculty permitting experiments to the *Consilium*, and this faculty was used extensively by the *Consilium*. An experiment carried out in one or two confined circumstances (a monastery, or a working parish) and for a very limited period is acceptable and can be useful. However, when carried out on a widespread basis and without any strict time limitation, such experiments open the way to anarchy;
5. In the *Consilium*, there are few Bishops with a specifically liturgical expertise, and very few are really theologians. The most acute deficiency in the *Consilium* is the lack of theologians. In fact, it could be said that they had been excluded altogether, which is something dangerous. In the liturgy, every word and every gesture expresses an idea which is always a theological idea. Given that all theology is currently questioned, the various theories current among the progressive theologians influence