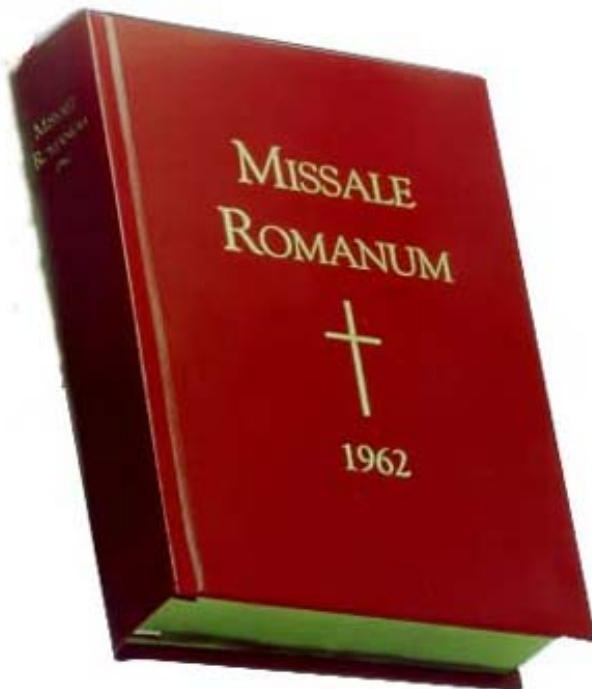




The Missal Crisis of '62

Fr. Patrick Perez

Whatever else may be said about modern Rome, at least one thing hasn't changed: In its official documents, Rome chooses its language carefully and deliberately, and what is not stated can often be as important as what is. Bearing in mind this fact, and the fact that those writing Roman documents these days are thoroughly imbued with the post-conciliar mentality, one condition of all the recent indults granted for the celebration of the traditional Latin Mass should arouse immediate suspicions on the part of any Catholic who still retains his ability to reason.



The Roman Missal contains the texts and rubrics for the celebration of the Mass

Beginning with *Quattuor Abhinc Annos* (1984) and *Ecclesia Dei* (1988) of John Paul II, and culminating with the recent motu proprio *Summorum Pontificum* (2007) of Benedict XVI, in which permission is so graciously granted by the respective Holy Fathers for a Mass that no priest needs anyone's permission, including the pope's, to offer any time he so chooses, the authors of these documents specify that these permissions are to celebrate Mass using the 1962 Missal, and only the 1962 Missal. Considering that between those documents, and the letter to the bishops which accompanies the latest motu proprio, this requirement is specified no fewer than 15 times.

"Methinks", as Shakespeare says through the mouth of Hamlet, "she doth protest too much". If permission is being given for the use of the liturgy

promulgated by the Council of Trent, then why should it matter if the Missal were from 1962 or 1662? The stated reason is that the 1962 Missal was the last "typical edition"

1962 or 1962. The stated reason is that the 1962 Missal was the last typical edition, the implication being that it is, therefore, the most “authentic”, as if the *Missale Romanum* were a sort of encyclopedia, the most reliable edition of which naturally being the one that is most current.

I contend that there is more to this condition than most Catholics suspect, which is a polite way of repeating what I immediately said to myself upon first reading *Quattuor Abhinc Annos* in 1984: “There’s something fishy going on here”. When I began to compare the 1962 typical edition with previous editions of the Missale, the nature of the “fish” soon became evident. I will explain as briefly as I am able without doing violence to the subject matter.

First signs of a reform

Doing a comparison of the various editions of the *Missale* from my own collection, including even one pre-Tridentine edition (1558), the first thing I concluded is that they are substantially identical, save for a few small details (the first post-Tridentine edition of 1570 adds a few rubrical specifications that its predecessors lacked) and for the addition of some feast propers, which is to be expected. This holds true until the typical editions of 1955-56, issued under Pius XII. Beginning in 1955 there were unprecedented changes made to the *Missale*, the first of many to come. These changes resulted in the *Missale* of 1962, but culminated in the *Missale Romanum* of Paul VI in 1969, the *Novus Ordo Missae*.



Pope Pius XII with Card. Angelo Roncalli, future John XXIII. Bugnini made the liturgical reforms of both Popes

The changes to the Missal decreed on November 16th, 1955, and becoming obligatory on March 25th, 1956, had their immediate origins several years previous. Shortly after commenting (on the apparitions of Our Lady in Fatima in 1917) “This persistence of Mary about the dangers which menace the Church is a divine warning against the suicide of altering the Faith in Her liturgy...”

This same Pacelli, now Pope Pius XII, established in 1948 the Commission for Liturgical Reform (!), appointing one Fr. Annibale Bugnini as its secretary. Remember that name, for Father, later Archbishop Bugnini, would eventually be revealed as a Freemason

and denounced to Paul VI, who immediately removed him from his positions of authority on Vatican commissions and sent him away, eventually to die in exile in Iran. All this, unfortunately, not before he had authored and instigated alteration after alteration of the Church’s liturgy, even finally the *Novus Ordo Missae* itself.

How the reform of Holy Week in 1955 was made

Shortly after the Commission for Liturgical Reform was founded there came a request from the bishops of France through their spokesperson Cardinal Lienart for permission to restore the Paschal Vigil to the evening rather than its morning celebration. Fair enough. It does seem a bit out-of-place to light a new fire and carry in the triple candle to chants of *Lumen Christi* in broad daylight. This permission was granted in 1951.