

Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre on the vernacular during Mass (1965).

From a work by Yves Chiron (b. 1960) who has written biographies of Pius IX, Pius X, Pius XI, and Paul VI:

December 1963 Constitution reveals no essential difference.¹

The final text of the Constitution on the Liturgy was voted in by the near-unanimity of the Council Fathers. Even Archbishop Lefebvre, who was to become a determined opponent of the Second Vatican Council and the great defender of the “perennial Mass,” voted for the text. Although he soon regretted “unforeseen and infelicitous results,” at the time he recognized that a reform of the liturgy was necessary, including in the Mass:

There was something to reform and to rediscover. Clearly, the first part of the Mass, which is intended to instruct the faithful and for them to express their faith, needed to reach those ends in a clearer and so to speak more intelligible manner. In my humble opinion, two such reforms seemed useful: first the rites of that first part and also a few translations into the vernacular.

The priest coming nearer to the faithful; communicating with them; praying and singing with them and therefore standing at the pulpit; saying the Collect, the Epistle, and the Gospel in their language; the priest singing in the divine traditional melodies the *Kyrie*, the *Gloria*, the creed with the faithful: these are so many good reforms that give back to that part of the Mass its true finality.²⁶

This statement in support of the vernacular by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre was made in the summer of 1965, and appeared in volume 95 of a French journal called *Itinéraires* (July-August 1965).