

THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDED THE
REDACTION OF THE ROMAN MISSAL (1970)¹

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IN THE LAST THREE DECADES there has been much discussion, even heated debate, about the liturgical texts currently in use, or proposed for use, in English-speaking countries. Articles in the popular press and in scholarly journals have centered almost exclusively on the texts produced by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL)—that is, on the quality of translations, the linguistic theories undergirding them, the competence of a mixed commission to compose original texts, and the respective roles of the bishops' conferences and the Holy See in approving vernacular translations.² These matters are

¹ I am grateful to the Intercultural Forum for Studies in Faith and Culture at the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center, Washington, D.C., for the support that enabled me to complete this article.

² See, for examples, Robert Speaight, "Liturgy and Language," *Theology: Monthly Review* 74 (October 1971): 444-56; Ralph A. Kiefer, "The Eucharistic Prayer," *Worship* 50 (1976): 316-23; Richard Toporoski, "The Language of Worship," *Communio* 4 (Fall 1977): 226-60; Ansgar J. Chupungco, "The English Translation of the Latin Liturgy," *Notitiae* 18 (1982): 91-100; Cuthbert Johnson, "Prefaces: Shaping a New Translation," *Pastoral Music* 16 (April-May 1992): 34-37; Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, "The Catechetical Role of the Liturgy and the Quality of Liturgical Texts: The Current ICEL Translation," *Communio* 20 (Spring 1993): 63-83; Eamon Duffy, "Rewriting the Liturgy: The Theological Issues of Translation," *New Blackfriars* 78 (January 1997): 4-27, reprinted in Stratford Caldecott, ed., *Beyond the Prosaic* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 97-126; Donald Trautman, "Rome and ICEL," *America* 182 (March 4, 2000): 7-11; Letter to the Editor written in response to Bishop Trautman's article by the Prefect for the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, entitled "Cardinal Jorge A. Medina on the ICEL Controversy," *America* 182 (April 14, 2000): 17-19; Ad Hoc Committee on the Forum on the Principles of Translation, *The Voice of the Church: A Forum on Liturgical Translation* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 2001).

vitaly important, for nothing is more formative and expressive of the Church's faith than the words with which she prays each day. Nevertheless, the scholarly and popular controversy swirling about the vernacular texts has distracted us from what, for the very same reason, is far more important: the Latin texts themselves, their origin and essential character.³

The work of the liturgical reform was vast beyond imagining, and was accomplished in a remarkably short period of time: a little over five years. Counting orations alone (i.e., collects, prayers over the gifts, and postcommunion prayers), the Missal of Paul VI has about one thousand five hundred prayers, approximately twice the number of prayers in the 1962 Missal.⁴ The orations of the new missal are from a variety of different sources: some are from the 1962 Missal itself;⁵ others come from ancient

³ Some studies have been published. For information about the sources themselves, see A. Dumas, "Les sources du nouveau missal romain," *Notitiae* 7 (1971): 37-42, 74-77, 94-95, 134-36, 276-80, 409-10; Anthony Ward and Cuthbert Johnson, "The Sources of the Roman Missal (1975)," *Notitiae* 22 (1986): 445-747; 23 (1987): 413-1009; and 32 (1996): 7-179. For works that examine elements of the Latin typical edition of the Missal of Paul VI in relation to their sources see Thomas A. Krosnicki, *Ancient Themes in Modern Prayer* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1973); Anthony Cekada, *The Problems with the Prayers of the Modern Mass* (Rockford, Ill.: Tan Books and Publishers, 1991); Gerard Moore, *Vatican II and the Collects for Ordinary Time: A Study in the Roman Missal* (1975) (San Francisco: The Scholars Press, 1998); Lorenzo Bianchi, "A Survey of the Theology, History, Terminology and Syntax in the Prayers of the Roman Missal," in *Theological and Historical Aspects of the Roman Missal*, The Proceedings of the Fifth International Colloquium of Historical, Canonical and Theological Studies on the Roman Catholic Liturgy (Kingston and Surbiton: Centre International d'Études Liturgiques, 2000), 127-64.

⁴ The alphabetical listing of all the orations in the present Roman Missal in Thaddäus A. Schnitker and Wolfgang A. Slaby, eds., *Concordantia verba missalis romani: Partes euhologicae* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1983), col. 2865-2910 contains 1,479 orations, exclusive of blessing prayers. Annibale Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy (1948-1975)*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 396 states that the new missal has "sixteen hundred prayers," which must be a round number that includes all the blessing prayers. Matias Augé, "Le collete del proprio del tempo nel nuovo messale," *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 84 (1970): 275 states that the new missal has "about two thousand prayers" (*duemilla preghiare circa*), a number that, based on Schnitker's list, is hard to explain. Both Bugnini and Augé state that the number of orations in the new missal is more than twice the number in the 1962 Missal.

⁵ That is, the last edition of the Roman Missal prior to the reforms mandated by Vatican II. The 1962 Missal is the last typical edition of the Missal of Pius V, also called the Tridentine Missal, which was commissioned by the Council of Trent and first appeared in

sacramentaries or collections of liturgical formularies; still others are new compositions. Many of the orations that were taken from earlier missals or codices were edited. The newly composed texts are woven from threads of two or three ancient orations; constructed of phrases from biblical, patristic, or ecclesiastical texts; or composed in their entirety by those who produced the new missal. Therefore, many of the orations of the Paul VI Missal are not ancient prayers in the strict sense, but modern redactions of ancient prayers or entirely new compositions.

At the time the new missal appeared, those involved in the work of the reform published articles in which they set forth the principles that guided the selection, arrangement, redaction, and creation of texts, and explained how the principles were concretely applied.⁶ Frequently they offered examples. These articles have received little scholarly attention though they are great reservoirs of information about the practical decisions made by the reformers. Because these decisions were often subjective, they invite reappraisal by competent scholars of a new generation. More important, however, than scholarly evaluation of the particular judgments, even those with widespread application, is the objective review of the philosophical and theological principles that drove the reform. This has not yet been undertaken. A thorough evaluation of these principles would distinguish those stipulated by the council Fathers from those embraced by the *Consilium*⁷ in the course of the revision process, and evaluate the

1570.

⁶ See, for example, Henry Ashworth, "The Prayers for the Dead in the Missal of Pope Paul VI," *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 85 (1971): 3-15; Augé, "Le collette del proprio del tempo nel nuovo messale," 275-98; Carlo Braga, "Il nuovo messale romano," *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 84 (1970): 249-74; Carlo Braga, "Il 'proprium de sanctis,'" *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 84 (1970): 401-3; Antoine Dumas, "Les oraisons du nouveau missel romain," *Questions Liturgiques* 25 (1971): 263-70; Walter Ferretti, "Le orazioni 'post communionem' de tempore nel nuovo messale romano," *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 84 (1970): 321-41; Vincenzo Raffa, "Le orazioni 'post communionem' de tempore nel nuovo messale romano," *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 84 (1970): 299-391.

⁷ The task of implementing the reform of the liturgy mandated by Vatican II was given to a group named the *Consilium ad exsequendam Constitutionem de Sacra Liturgia* (Consultation to Carry out the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy). The *Consilium* was comprised of members, consultants, and advisors. All but three of the forty members were bishops. Members were not responsible for producing the revised texts themselves, but for

latter in relation to both the intentions of the council Fathers and the relevant Catholic philosophical and theological principles.⁸ Such studies are essential for a well-founded appreciation of the present missal and of Catholic liturgical history as a whole.

Thirty years after the promulgation of the missal, the most critical studies have not yet been done: those that would definitively establish whether the reform of the liturgy was a renewal that was entirely faithful to authentic Catholic liturgical tradition, a reform that departed from the prior liturgical tradition and inaugurated something fundamentally new, or a revision that is more accurately placed between the preceding two possibilities.

Perhaps the most authoritative, though by no means the most detailed, of the articles appearing in connection with the promulgation of the Paul VI Missal was written by Antoine

deciding matters of policy and approving schemata proposed by the various *coetus* (study groups). The study groups were made up of several consultors; one consultor, called the *relator*, was in charge. Consultors worked together to review the missal and draw up the various schemata. Drafts of schemata were sent to advisors for review before being presented to the members for approval (Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy*, 65-66).

Each study group was assigned a particular task. *Coetus* 18bis was responsible for the prayers and prefaces. It had seven members. Five of these are listed as consultors and functioned as such. Two are listed as advisors but one of these, Antoine Dumas, seems to have functioned as a consultor for he eventually became *relator* of the group. See *Consilium ad exsequendam Constitutionem de Sacra Liturgia, Elenchus membrorum - consultorum consiliariorum coetuum a studiis* (Vatican: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1964), passim.

Three of the other authors cited in the preceding footnote are named in the same membership list. Ashworth and Raffa were consultors; Braga was attached to the office of the *Consilium* secretary, Annibale Bugnini.

⁸ For instance, Augé, “Le collete del proprio del tempo nel nuovo messale,” 275-77, explicitly notes that the Fathers of Vatican II did not envision a reform or enrichment of the orations of the missal. Rather, he explains, the qualities and limitations of the euchological texts became more evident in the light of the decision to introduce the use of the vernacular and of the call in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 21 that the liturgical texts “express more clearly the holy things which they signify, and that the Christian people, as far as possible, be able to understand them with ease and to take part in them fully, actively, and as it befits a community.” Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy*, 398, names certain principles agreed upon by the *Consilium* in October 1966, that is, a year after the council had ended and six months after study group 18bis had begun its work (on the preceding page, Bugnini reports that the group’s first task, reviewing and revising all the orations of the temporal cycle, had been undertaken at a meeting in Louvain, April 5-11, 1966).

Dumas.⁹ At the time of its publication Dumas was a member of the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship. Earlier he had been in charge of the *Consilium* study group responsible for the orations of the Paul VI Missal, *Coetus* 18bis.¹⁰ He was, therefore, intimately involved in the decisions he discusses. Brief though his article is, it offers a more comprehensive introduction than the others because it touches upon nearly every type of oration found in the new missal. Dumas's article is divided into two sections. The first lays out the principles followed in selecting, editing, and composing the orations of the Paul VI Missal, and explains how these principles were applied. The second illustrates both the principles and their application by citing specific examples. In his conclusion, Dumas recommends that the Paul VI Missal be studied in the light of what he has set forth.

My essay follows his concluding recommendation. Like Dumas's article, mine has two parts. The first lays out the texts of the examples he cites, reproducing in full both the new oration and its source(s), and discusses the most noteworthy differences between the old and the new in light of Dumas's comments on the same. The second discusses the principles applied in the reform of the liturgy as these are explicitly or implicitly presented by Dumas, and then identifies aspects that merit further scholarly attention.

Dumas's essay proceeds from principles to the citing of examples. Mine moves in the opposite direction. The goal is to present the most concrete picture possible. A study that considers such a small number of orations cannot draw conclusions about the character of the missal as whole. Dumas, however, has cited these examples as specific illustrations of how the principles directing the reform were implemented. Precisely because he cites them, these examples are a fitting place for us to start.

⁹ Dumas, "Les oraisons du nouveau missel romain," 263-70.

¹⁰ Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy*, 397 n. 10 lists Dumas as a member of *Coetus* 18bis and states that A. Rose became its *relator* when P. Bruylants died in October, 1966. This appears to be an error. See Bernard Botte, *From Silence to Participation: An Insider's View of Liturgical Renewal*, trans. John Sullivan (Washington, D.C.: The Pastoral Press, 1988), 151; and Piero Marini, "Elenco degli 'schemata' del 'consilium' e della congregazione per il culto divino (Marzo 1964-Luglio 1975)," *Notitiae* 18 (1982): 668-69.

My primary purpose in presenting this material is not to assess the character of the new missal, but to demonstrate the importance of studying it carefully in specific relation to its sources. The scope of the present investigation is so limited that it can only identify tendencies, not in the revised missal, but in the examples of revision themselves. Since these tendencies are pronounced, and therefore may be characteristic of the missal as a whole, they identify areas for further scholarly investigation.

I. EXAMPLES

We will examine ten orations in the eight numbered examples that follow. Wherever pertinent, I introduce the example with an English translation of Dumas's comments on the revision or type of revision, and in every case transcribe the full texts of the orations he cites. Dumas's citations identify the source prayers as well as the redaction that appears in the Missal of Paul VI. These versions are set side-by-side in both Latin and English so that the reader can see exactly what was deleted, retained, and changed. A discussion of the most noteworthy features of the revision follows. I examine only those examples cited by Dumas whose sources were other orations. The order of presentation is that of Dumas's essay. In the orations taken from ancient codices, Latin orthography, punctuation, and capitalization have been regularized, and unambiguous grammatical or transcription errors corrected. The translations, both of Dumas's text and of the orations, are my own.

A) Revised Orations

Example 1: Accommodation to the Modern Mentality

The first example is of a change made in order to accommodate modern sensibilities. Dumas writes:

Other texts, having become shocking for the man of today, have been frankly corrected while respecting the structure of the text and the movement of the phrase. For example, the former secret for Saturday of the second week of Lent, which has become the prayer over the offerings for the third Sunday of Lent,¹¹ changes the expression: *non gravemur externis*, difficult to understand, to: *fraterna dimittere studeamus*, decidedly more evangelical.¹²

<p>1962: SECRET SATURDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT</p> <p>His sacrificiis, Domine, concede placatus, ut, qui propriis oramus absolvi delictis, non gravemur externis.</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 10px auto;"/> <p>Appeased, O Lord, by these sacrifices, grant that we who pray to be set free from our own sins may not be oppressed by the sins of those outside.</p>	<p>PAUL VI:¹³ OVER THE OFFERINGS THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT</p> <p>His sacrificiis, Domine, concede placatus, ut, qui propriis oramus absolvi delictis, fraterna dimittere studeamus.</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 10px auto;"/> <p>Appeased, O Lord, by these sacrifices, grant that we who pray to be set free from our own sins may be eager to forgive those of the brethren.</p>
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The change from *non gravemur externis* to *fraterna dimittere studeamus* creates an entirely different petition. The 1962 oration asks God to grant, through the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice, which

¹¹ Before the liturgical reform of Vatican II, the oration prayed by the priest directly before the Preface of the Mass was called the *secreta* (secret) because it was prayed in a soft voice. In the new missal the same oration is prayed aloud and its name has been changed to *super oblata* (over the offerings). In the ICEL sacramentary it is called the "prayer over the gifts."

¹² Dumas, "Les oraisons du nouveau missel romain," 267-68: "D'autres textes, devenus choquants pour l'homme d'aujourd'hui, ont été franchement corrigés, tout en respectant la structure du texte et le mouvement de la phrase. Par exemple l'ancienne secrète du samedi de la 2^{me} semaine de Carême, devenue la prière sur les offrandes du 3^{me} dimanche de Carême, change l'expression : *non gravemur externis*, difficilement compréhensible, en : *fraterna dimittere studeamus*, décidément plus évangélique." Somewhat puzzling is Dumas's initial presentation of this oration as "shocking to the man of today" and his later description of the shocking bit as only "difficult to understand."

¹³ The Missal of Paul VI has appeared in three typical editions dated 1970, 1975, and 2002. All the orations identified as "Paul VI" in this study are identical in all three editions.

is about to be re-presented liturgically, that the members of the Christian community not be oppressed or burdened by the sins of those outside the Church (presumably pagans, heretics, and so forth). The revision asks God to make the members of the Christian community eager to forgive the sins of one another. The original, then, distinguishes the Church community as a whole, with the sins of its own members, from the sum of all those who do not belong to the Church, with their sins, whereas the revision makes mention only of the sins of Christians and distinguishes them according to whether, from the perspective of each individual member of the Christian community, the sins are one's own or those of one's brothers and sisters in Christ.

The 1962 text is not indifferent toward those who are separated from Christ and from us. Rather, it expresses a deep confidence in the power of his saving death and resurrection. Those who pray it acknowledge that no matter what sins are committed by those outside the Church, or how her members may suffer as a result of these sins, those who have been redeemed in Christ are not to be weighed down because faith assures them that God has already granted them victory in his Son.

The 1962 petition expresses both a thoroughly orthodox understanding of the nature of evil and a realistic sense of ironic possibility. Only our own sins necessarily do true harm to us. The sins of others, which we suffer as physical evil, cannot truly harm us unless we permit them to engage our will so that a moral lapse follows. It would be a lamentable irony if those whom Christ has set free from the sins for which they are personally responsible were to be brought low by sins for which they bear no responsibility.

Dumas describes the original oration as "shocking for the man of today" and "difficult to understand." Perhaps it seemed so to him. At first glance many might think the prayer strange. Since September 11, 2001, however, its petition is easily understood by Christians of every stripe who have thought about the attacks on the United States on that date in religious terms. There are two points that flow from this.

First, the relevance of a particular oration for the Church universal is not something that can always be judged by persons of any one time or place. The prudent course is to trust the wisdom of our liturgical tradition to beg for what we need even when we cannot comprehend or imagine it. If changed historical circumstances give fresh relevance to this oration, perhaps no generation should permit itself to reject as unsuitable a petition that has enjoyed long use.¹⁴

Second, limiting the content of orations to what editors think can be easily understood by the majority of the faithful unduly limits the capacity of the prayers to enlighten and inspire. It seems fitting that the corpus of orations include prayers that present deeper mysteries of faith so that by meditating upon them the faithful may grow in wisdom and love.

Dumas asserts that the revised oration is “decidedly more evangelical” than its source. Certainly the revised text conforms closely to gospel instruction: its petition echoes the fifth petition of the Lord’s prayer. But the original oration brings us more deeply into the mystery of Christ and causes us to internalize aspects of it that familiar gospel verses do not make plain. The difference between the two is that the revision petitions that we do something that everyone who has heard the gospel knows we are obliged to do, namely, forgive the sins of the brethren, while the original asks something that only those who have drunk deeply of the mystery of Christ would see for themselves. Neither, in my judgment, is more or less evangelical than the other.

Lastly, the literary artistry of the 1962 text is manifestly superior to that of the revision. *Propriis*, in the original version, forms an overlapping double inclusion with *delictis* and *externis*,

¹⁴ Eugenio Moeller and Ioanne Maria Clément, *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 160, t. 4 (Turnholt: Brepols, 1994), 256-57 lists forty-nine ancient manuscripts in which the 1962 prayer is found. It appears in Masses in times of tribulation (*tempore tribulationis*), for the security of places (*pro stabilitate locorum*), for charity (*pro caritate*), for the concord of the brothers (*pro concordia fratrum*), for rogation days, in Lent and in the time after Pentecost. It seems to have been used both continuously and widely from the eighth century until the reforms following Vatican II. A fifteenth century codex has a variant according to which we ask not to be grieved by eternal punishment (*poenis non gravemur aeternis*).

and the result clause, *propriis oramus absolvi delictis, // non gravemur externis*, presents a perfectly balanced chiasm: *propriis/externis* (sins belonging to us/the sins of outsiders) and *oramus absolvi/non gravemur* (we pray to be set free/we may not be burdened). On account of our own sins, we send prayer up to heaven; on account of the sins of those outside the Church, we are in danger of being weighed down. Also, a slight rhyme produced by the unstressed ablative endings runs through the 1962 oration from beginning to end. The new prayer lacks the literary sophistication of the older prayer: there is neither double inclusion nor chiasm, and the rhyme scheme, because it is not picked up in the revised ending, is abandoned midway through the text.

Example 2: Exchanging a Negative for a Positive

Dumas's second example consists of two orations in which positive phrases were substituted for negative ones. Dumas explains:

Frequently the direction of the phrase has been turned around, going from a negative to a more dynamic positive. Thus in the prayer after communion for the fourth Sunday in Paschal time, the text (Gelasian 272) referring to the Good Shepherd no longer reads: *diabolica non sinas incursione lacerari*,¹⁵ but: *in aeternis pascuis collocare digneris*. In an analogous manner: *nostrae fragilitatis subsidium* (prayer over the offerings for the tenth Sunday *per annum*) moved from the eleventh Sunday after Pentecost, has become *nostrae caritatis augmentum*.¹⁶

¹⁵ Gelasian 272 actually reads "*lacerare*" (see full text below), but Dumas is clearly correct in presenting the passive, rather than the active, infinitive.

¹⁶ Dumas, "Les oraisons du nouveau missel romain," 268: "Souvent, le sens de la phrase été retourné, passant du négatif à un positif plus dynamique. Ainsi, dans la prière après la communion du 4^{me} dimanche de Pâques, le texte (Gélasian 272) relatif au bon Pasteur ne se lit plus : *diabolica non sinas incursione lacerari*, mais : *in aeternis pascuis collocare digneris*. D'une manière analogue : *nostrae fragilitatis subsidium* (prière sur les offrandes de 10^{me} dimanche *per annum*, venue du 11^{me} après la Pentecôte) devient : *nostrae caritatis augmentum*."

<p>GELASIAN¹⁷ 272: ORATION OVER THE PEOPLE WEDNESDAY, FIFTH WEEK OF LENT</p> <p>Gregem tuum, pastor bone, placatus intende, et oves quas praetioso sanguine filii tui redemisti, diabolica non sinas incursione lacerare.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Appeased, hearken to your flock, O Good Shepherd, and do not allow the sheep that you have redeemed with the precious blood of your Son to be wounded by diabolical attack.</p>	<p>PAUL VI: POSTCOMMUNION FOURTH SUNDAY OF PASCHAL TIME</p> <p>Gregem tuum, pastor bone, placatus intende, et oves quas praetioso filii tui sanguine redemisti, in aeternis pascuis collocare digneris.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Appeased, hearken to your flock, O Good Shepherd, and vouchsafe to place the sheep that you have redeemed with the precious blood of your Son in eternal pastures.</p>
<p>1962: SECRET ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST</p> <p>Respice, Domine, quaesumus, nostram propitius servitatem, ut quod offerimus sit tibi munus acceptum, et sit nostrae fragilitatis subsidium.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Look mercifully upon our service, O Lord, we beseech you, that what we offer may be a gift acceptable to you and a support to our frailty.</p>	<p>PAUL VI: OVER THE OFFERINGS TENTH SUNDAY <i>PER ANNUM</i></p> <p>Respice, Domine, quaesumus, nostram propitius servitatem, ut quod offerimus sit tibi munus acceptum, et nostrae caritatis augmentum.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Look mercifully upon our service, O Lord, we beseech you, that what we offer may be a gift acceptable to you and an increase of our charity.</p>

¹⁷ All orations from the Gelasian Sacramentary are found in Leo Cunibert Mohlberg, *Liber sacramentorum romanae aeclesiae ordinis anni circuli* (Rome: Herder, 1960) where they are arranged in numerical order. The sacramentary that Dumas calls the "Gelasian" is also called the "Old Gelasian." It is a unique Frankish recension of a Roman Mass book whose actual title is that used by Mohlberg. The original manuscript is preserved in the Vatican Library (*Codex Vaticanus Reginensis latinus* 316). The ancient sacramentary was the presider's book. It contained all the texts he personally needed to celebrate Mass, administer the sacraments, preside at the Hours and so forth. See Cyrille Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy: An Introduction to the Sources*, trans. and rev. by William Storey and Niels Rasmussen (Washington, D.C.: The Pastoral Press, 1981) 64-65.

In the first of the sets presented above, those who pray the original version are aware of danger and ask for God's continual assistance; those who pray the revised version request only the attainment of their final goal. The oration in the Gelasian Sacramentary is a Lenten *super populum*, while the version in the Paul VI missal is a postcommunion in Paschal time. The change in both setting and use gives rise to several questions. What, for example, is the exact nature of the *super populum* prayers in the ancient missals? in other words, what sort of oration has been adapted?¹⁸ Next, would a traditional Paschal postcommunion mention attacks of the devil, ask for protection in more delicately worded terms, or not mention any need at all?¹⁹ Finally, is there an antecedent use for the expression "*aeternis pascuis*" that recommends its adoption here?

In the second set presented above, the revised version requests an increase in charity. Such a gift is a worthy object of petition,

¹⁸ The Missal of Pius V has prayers *super populum* only for the weekday Masses of Lent. The Gelasian Sacramentary and other ancient Mass books have prayers *super populum* for Masses throughout the entire year. Prayed at the end of Mass, these seem to be blessing prayers that ask that the fruits of the mysteries just celebrated be given to the faithful under an aspect that particularly befits the season or feast. In this setting, they connote far more than would be the case if the same prayer were used as the collect in the same Mass.

However, Dumas, "Les oraisons du nouveau missel romain," 264, comments concerning the *super populum*: "We note, finally, that certain prayers over the people formerly used in Lent, have retaken their place as collects" ("Notons, enfin que certaines prières sur le peuple, autrefois utilisées en Carême, ont repris leur place de collectes"). He is thinking, evidently, only of the *super populum* of the 1962 Missal and, on the evidence of the Gelasian Sacramentary, his judgment that these prayers were originally collects appears to be wrong.

Missale Romanum (1970) reintroduces "*orationes super populum*." Under this title the third typical edition presents twenty-four prayers any one of which may be used at the discretion of the priest at the end of any celebration of Mass, or of the liturgy of the Word, or of the Office, or of a sacrament (*Orationes sequentes adhiberi possunt, ad libitum sacerdotis, in fine celebrationis Missae, aut liturgiae verbi, aut Officii, aut Sacramentorum*). The broad range of uses stipulated for these prayers "over the people," and the fact that whether they are used at all lies at the discretion of the celebrant, distinguishes them from the *super populum* of earlier missals wherein specific prayers are assigned to particular celebrations and are not optional.

¹⁹ Certain of the Paschal postcommunions in the Gelasian Sacramentary do ask for protection: no. 477, Tuesday in the octave of Easter, asks for protection in general terms; no. 503, Sunday of the octave of Easter, begs that we be spared entanglement in the traps of error; no. 555, the third Sunday of Easter, asks that we be purged of vice and delivered from every danger.

for an increase in charity is an increase in our participation in God's own life. It is an increase in grace. However, by their essential nature all the sacraments, and especially the Eucharist, are rites in which God is worshiped and charity or divine life is either bestowed (Baptism and Penance) or increased (all the rest, including Penance when it is received devotionally). A petition for an increase in charity, to be theologically precise, asks only for what we believe happens whenever the mysteries are worthily celebrated or received. The 1962 version, on the other hand, asks for specific assistance: namely, support for our weakness.

Changing the direction of a phrase from "negative" to "positive" inevitably entails a change in meaning, a point that is verified in the examples cited by Dumas although he makes no mention of it. He does, however, describe positive phrasing as "more dynamic." The specific change in meaning that results when a positive phrase replaces one that is negative varies according to the prayer and the particular change made in it. In general, however, the practice reduces the dramatic tension in orations by excising mention of things that threaten well-being in Christ. In this sense, the revised prayers are actually less dynamic than the source orations.

More important than the dynamism of particular prayers, however, is the fact that liturgical texts present a vision of Christian life that unfolds over the course of each year. Dumas tells us that negative phrases were "frequently" made positive. If this is true, the liturgical portrayal of Christian life, and therefore of Christian spirituality, will have been significantly altered because mention of those things against which Christians must necessarily struggle in this world will frequently have been removed. This editorial practice raises questions for scholars with the requisite competencies to pursue: whether the revised missal presents a revised spirituality and, if so, how the new spirituality compares and contrasts with that (or those) found in earlier missals.

Example 3: Adaptation of a Restored Text

Dumas's next example is another instance in which the editors replaced a negative phrase with a positive one. In this case,

however, the substitution was made only after the prayer was restored to its earliest known form. Dumas tells his readers:

It happened sometimes that beautiful texts, retained after a rigorous selection process or even perfectly restored, and put in the place that suits them best, still do not give complete satisfaction. In this case a slight adaptation remained necessary. The most typical case is that of the collect of Easter Sunday that, rescued from the Gregorian deformation in which it passed into the Missal of Pius V and, made to conform to the best witness (Gelasian 463), ended with a regrettable collapse evoking death for the second time in a few words. We believed it good to put the ending in harmony with paschal joy by replacing *a morte animae* with *in lumine vitae*.²⁰

<p>GELASIAN 463: COLLECT SUNDAY OF THE PASCH</p> <p>Deus, qui per Unigenitum tuum aeternitatis nobis aditum devicta morte reserasti, da nobis, quaesumus, ut, qui resurrectionis sollemnia colimus, per innovationem tui spiritus a morte animae resurgamus.</p>	<p>PAUL VI: COLLECT SOLEMNITY OF THE RESURRECTION</p> <p>Deus, qui hodierna die, per Unigenitum tuum, aeternitatis nobis aditum, devicta morte reserasti, da nobis, quaesumus, ut, qui resurrectionis dominicae sollemnia colimus, per innovationem tui Spiritus in lumine vitae resurgamus.</p>
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²⁰ Dumas, “Les oraisons du nouveau missel romain,” 268: “Il est arrivé parfois que de beaux textes, retenus après une sélection sévère ou même parfaitement restaurés, et mis à la place qui leur convenait le mieux, ne donnent pas encore entière satisfaction. Dans ce cas, une légère adaptation demeurait nécessaire. Le cas plus typique est celui de la collecte du dimanche de Pâques qui, dégagée de sa déformation grégorienne passée dans le Missel de Pie V et rendue conforme au meilleur témoin (Gélasien 463), se terminait par une chute regrettable évoquant la mort pour la deuxième fois en quelques mots. On a cru bon de mettre la finale en harmonie avec la joie pascale en remplaçant *a morte animae* par *in lumine vitae*.” The Pius V Easter collect of which Dumas speaks is: “Deus, qui hodierna die per Unigenitum tuum aeternitatis nobis aditum, devicta morte, reserasti: vota nostra, quae praeveniendo aspiras, etiam adjuvando prosequere” (“O God, who on this day has unlocked for us the gate of eternity through your Only-begotten Son who conquered death, attend our vows, which you inspire by your grace, also with your assistance”).

<p>O God, who unlocked for us the gate of eternity through your Only-begotten Son who conquered death, grant, we beseech you, that we who celebrate the solemnity of [his] resurrection, may, through renewal of the Holy Spirit, rise from death of soul.</p>	<p>O God, who on this day unlocked for us the gate of eternity through your Only-Begotten Son who conquered death, grant, we beseech you, that we who celebrate the solemnity of the Lord's resurrection, may, through renewal of the Holy Spirit, rise in the light of life.</p>
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The poetic parallelism of the Gelasian text is the literary expression of a theological truth: the bodily resurrection of Christ from physical death is the source of our spiritual resurrection from the death of sin. Therefore, what Dumas describes as a “regrettable collapse evoking death for the second time in a few words” is in fact something else entirely. It is an explicit acknowledgment that Christ’s victory over physical death makes our escape from spiritual death possible.

One wonders, on this account, whether the criteria for “complete satisfaction” were not a little too subjective or even narrowly ideological. It seems likely that the editors saw the further “slight adjustment” to the Easter collect as nothing more than changing a negative to “a more dynamic positive.” In this case, however, the revision is inconsistent with the essence of the celebration itself. The life we celebrate with Paschal joy is available only through the destruction of death and is simply not conceivable otherwise. To shy away from the mention of death’s death is to blur the character of the life being celebrated. The good news of the Paschal mystery is definitive victory over death and all that belongs to its realm.

The “slight adjustment” that disrupts the theological parallelism of the oration also disturbs the parallelism of its compositional structure. From a purely poetic perspective, preserving the literary parallelism requires that the change introduced by the editors be accompanied by a like change in the first part of the oration whereby the Only-Begotten Son, instead of conquering death, rises to life. Here, as in example 1 above, the literary form of the original is attenuated in the revision.

Example 4: Changing Perspective

Dumas's next example concerns changes made to the collects of two saints. He writes:

[I]t is easy to understand why, in certain collects for Christian leaders, the expression: *culmine imperii* was changed to *cura regiminis* (Saint Henry), while *terreno regno* gave way to *terreni regiminis cura* (Saint Louis): a simple change of perspective for the same reality.²¹

²¹ Ibid.: "D'autre part, il est aisé de comprendre pourquoi, dans certains collectes de chefs chrétiens, l'expression : *culmine imperii* s'est changé en : *cura regiminis* (saint Henri), tandis que *terreno regno* faisait place à *terreni regiminis cura* (saint Louis) : simple changement de perspective pour une même réalité."

<p>1962: COLLECT FOR ST. HENRY (JULY 15)</p> <p>Deus, qui <u>hodierna die</u> beatum Henricum confessorem tuum e terreni <u>culmine imperii</u> ad regnum aeternum transtulisti: <u>te supplices exoramus;</u> <u>ut, sicut illum, gratiae tuae ubertate</u> <u>praeventum, illecebras saeculi</u> <u>superare fecisti,</u> <u>ita nos facias eius imitatione,</u> <u>mundi huius blandimenta vitare, et</u> <u>ad te puris mentibus pervenire.</u></p> <hr/> <p>O God, who <u>on this day</u> brought blessed Henry, <u>your confessor,</u> <u>from the summit of</u> earthly <u>sovereignty</u> into the eternal <u>kingdom,</u> <u>humbly we implore you,</u> <u>that, as you, going before him with</u> <u>the abundance of your grace,</u> <u>granted him to overcome the</u> <u>enticements of the age,</u> <u>so may you grant us, through</u> <u>imitation of him, to shun the</u> <u>allurements of this world and</u> <u>attain unto you with pure</u> <u>minds.</u></p>	<p>PAUL VI: COLLECT FOR ST. HENRY (JULY 13)</p> <p>Deus, qui beatum Henricum, <u>gratiae tuae ubertate</u> <u>praeventum,</u> e terreni <u>cura regiminis</u> ad superna <u>mirabiliter erexisti,</u> <u>eius nobis intercessione largire,</u> <u>ut inter mundanas varietates</u></p> <hr/> <p>puris ad te mentibus festinemus.</p> <hr/> <p>O God, who <u>having gone before</u> <u>blessed Henry with the</u> <u>abundance of your grace</u> <u>wondrously raised him</u> <i>from care of</i> <i>earthly government</i> <u>unto things</u> <u>caelestial,</u> <u>grant, through his intercession,</u> <u>that amid the diverse things of this</u> <u>world</u></p> <hr/> <p><u>we may hasten toward/unto you</u> <u>with pure minds.</u></p>
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<p>1962: COLLECT FOR ST. LOUIS (AUGUST 25)</p> <p>Deus, qui beatum Ludovicum <u>confessorem tuum de terreno</u> <u>regno</u> ad caelestis regni gloriam transtulisti: eius, quaesumus, <u>meritis et</u> intercessione, <u>Regis regum Iesu Christi Filii tui</u> <u>facias nos esse consortes.</u></p> <hr/> <p>O God, who brought blessed Louis, <u>your confessor, from an earthly</u> <u>kingdom</u> into the glory of the heavenly kingdom, we beseech you through <u>his merits</u> <u>and</u> intercession, <u>grant us to be partakers of Jesus</u> <u>Christ, your Son, the King of</u> <u>kings.</u></p>	<p>PAUL VI: COLLECT FOR ST. LOUIS (AUGUST 25)</p> <p>Deus, qui beatum Ludovicum, e <u>terreni regiminis cura</u> ad caelestis regni gloriam transtulisti, eius, quaesumus, intercessione <u>concede,</u> <u>ut, per munera temporalia quae</u> <u>gerimus,</u> <u>regnum tuum quaeramus aeternum.</u></p> <hr/> <p>O God, who brought blessed Louis from <u>care of earthly government</u> into the glory of the heavenly kingdom, we beseech you, grant through his intercession, <u>that, through the earthly</u> <u>responsibilities that we bear,</u> <u>we may seek your eternal kingdom.</u></p>
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The actual revisions to the two collects were far more extensive than Dumas reports. The revisions as a whole are underscored; those of the kind that Dumas mentions are also italicized. We will begin with the small change in each prayer that Dumas names.

Henry, a German king who became Holy Roman Emperor, died in 1024; Louis, king of France, died in 1297. The original collect for Henry describes his rule as it was understood in his own day. The revised version describes it in terms that reflect modern democratic sensibilities. It is anachronistic. The original collect for Louis does not explicitly mention his rule as king. This is supplied in the revision—but, again, in terms more reflective of our historical circumstances than his own. The revision may have been designed to accommodate a modern mentality. Its effect, however, is to obscure the truth that holiness is found in persons of every age and social rank. Henry and Louis were not simply

entrusted with the care of earthly government; they were Christian rulers who became holy as they ruled because of the Christian way in which they ruled.

In order to appreciate the nature of the other changes made to the collect for Henry, we need to know what the editors sought to achieve in their revision of the sanctoral orations. Dumas tells us:

In the sanctoral prayers we . . . put greater emphasis on the personality of the saint, his mission in the Church, the practical lesson that his example gives to men of today. All the corrections or new compositions in the new missal proceed in this direction.²²

When the editors excised mention of Henry “overcoming the enticements of his age” by the grace of God, they created a prayer that tells us nothing about Henry’s personality or his way of holiness. The failure of the corrections to this prayer to proceed in the direction established for all the sanctoral orations suggests that the editors of the new missal did not view Henry’s example of freedom from worldly enticements as something suitable for imitation by modern Christians, or that they thought the original collect posits too great an opposition between heaven and earth, or possibly both. Since these themes recur and become more explicit in later examples, we shall consider them as they reappear below.

There are three other differences that a more extensive treatment would examine that can only be identified here. The new text (1) omits the reverential formula “humbly we implore you,” (2) asks that Henry intercede for us rather than that we imitate him (a change that flows directly from the decision to omit reference to Henry’s particular virtue), and (3) severs the connection between purity of mind and freedom from the attractions of this world established by the original prayer.

²² Ibid., 264-65: “Dans le sanctoral, on . . . mieux mettre en valeur la personnalité du saint, sa mission dans l’Église, la leçon pratique que donne son exemple aux hommes d’aujourd’hui. C’est dans ce sens que vont toutes les corrections ou créations qu’il sera facile de relever dans le nouveau Missel.”

The change in the petition of the revised collect for Louis is striking and shares common features with the new oration for Henry. The 1962 prayer for Louis begs that we may have partnership with Christ who is the King of kings—here, particularly, the King of King Louis—whereas the revised text asks that we may seek, but does not specify that we also find, “your eternal kingdom.” The petition of the revised text, therefore, is stunningly effete in comparison to that of the original collect which seeks nothing less than full incorporation into Christ. Similarly, the old collect for Henry begs that God make us attain unto, or reach (*pervenire*), himself, whereas the new version asks only that we hasten (*festinimus*) unto him. The verb *pervenire* stipulates arrival, *festinare* does not.

A second feature common to both revised collects is a new emphasis on the things of this world which, in addition, are presented in a wholly positive light. In the revised prayer for Henry, we hasten “amid the diverse things of this world,” instead of asking, as in the original version, to be able to shun its allurements. In the somewhat convoluted revised collect for Louis, we ask God to grant, through the intercession of the saint, that we may seek his eternal kingdom “through the earthly responsibilities that we bear.” In the source text we ask to be granted partnership with Christ “through the merits and intercession” of the saint.

The changes to these prayers, which are much more extensive than Dumas indicates, highlight the methodological importance of returning to the sources. Those who desire to gain a full and accurate understanding of the work of the *Consilium* must examine all the pertinent primary texts, and not rely exclusively upon even those articles, like Dumas’s own, that were written by the reformers themselves for the express purpose of describing and explaining their work. The number of changes is too great, and their nature too substantial, for even the most thorough summary to be adequate.

B) Centonized Orations

In the section devoted to the creation of new texts, Dumas describes a practice he calls “centonization,” whereby new prayers are composed by stitching together phrases from two or more ancient orations. Dumas explains: “This is a method that allowed a revival of the ancient euchological treasury by using the best texts so as to present them in a new form in the traditional Roman style.”²³ The rest of our examples present the centonized texts cited by Dumas so that the reader can see the process firsthand and judge the success of particular instances.

Example 5

Dumas tells us that the truth of the text was the first concern of the redactors,²⁴ and that care for the truth manifested itself in changes to a great many prayers. Among these were those that were thought to posit too great an opposition between heaven and earth. The following remarks of Dumas are cited to introduce the first centonized prayer because it seems also to illustrate how the editors dealt with texts that they judged to place heaven and earth in unfitting opposition:

Concern for the truth required adaptation in the case of numerous orations, as we have said above. For example, many texts, for a long while too well-known, put heaven and earth into radical opposition: from whence the antithetical couplet oft repeated in the old missal: *terrena despiciere et amare caelestia*, which, though a right understanding is possible, is very easily badly translated. An adaptation was imperative that, without harming the truth, took account of the modern mentality and the directives of Vatican II. Thus the prayer after communion for the second Sunday of Advent says quite justifiably: *sapienter*

²³ Ibid., 268: “C’est un procédé qui a permis de renouveler le trésor euchologique ancien, en utilisant les meilleurs textes pour les présenter sous une forme nouvelle, dans le style romain traditionnel.”

²⁴ Ibid., 263-65.

perpendere in place of the word *despicere* which is so often poorly understood.²⁵

²⁵ Ibid., 267: “Le besoin d’adaptation s’est révélé nécessaire dans le cas de nombreuses oraisons, par souci de vérité, comme nous l’avons dit ci-dessus. Par exemple, plusieurs textes, depuis longtemps trop connus, mettaient en opposition radicale la terre et le ciel ; d’où le couple antithétique, souvent répété dans l’ancien Missel : *terrene despicere et amare caelestia* possible de bien comprendre mais très facile de mal traduire. Une adaptation s’imposait donc qui, sans nuire à la vérité, tenait compte de la mentalité moderne et des directives de Vatican II. Ainsi, la prière après la communion du 2^{me} dimanche de l’Avent dit très justement : *sapienter perpendere*, au lieu du mot : *despicere*, si souvent mal compris.”

<p>VERONESE²⁶ 173: COLLECT ASCENSION</p> <p>Da nobis, Domine, non terrena sapere sed amare caelestia et, inter praetereuntia constitutos, iam nunc inhaerere mansuris.</p> <hr/> <p>Grant us, O Lord, not to savor of what is earthly, but to love what is heavenly,</p> <p>and, placed in the midst of passing things, already now to cling to what is lasting.</p>	<p>VERONESE 1053: SECRET MONTH OF SEPTEMBER</p> <p>Prosint nobis, Domine, frequentata mysteria, quae nos a cupiditatibus terrenis expediant et instituant amare caelestia.</p> <hr/> <p>O Lord, may the mysteries we have celebrated profit us,</p> <p>which free us from earthbound desires and cause us to love the things of heaven.</p>	<p>PAUL VI: POSTCOMMUNION FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT</p> <p>Prosint nobis, <i>quaesumus</i>, Domine, frequentata mysteria, <i>quibus</i> nos, inter praetereuntia <i>ambulantes</i>, iam nunc <i>instituis</i> amare caelestia et inhaerere mansuris.</p> <hr/> <p>O Lord, <i>we beseech</i> <i>you</i>, may the mysteries that we have celebrated profit us, <i>by which you</i> now already <i>cause</i> us, who walk in the midst of passing things, to love heavenly things and to cling to what is lasting.</p>
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Because the English cognate for *despicere* is “despise” we are disposed to find the Latin expression *terrena despicere et amare caelestia* rather harsh. In actual fact *terrena despicere* is better translated “to look away from, disdain, or refuse to obey earthly things” than “to despise the things of earth.” The vocabulary of

²⁶ All Veronese orations are found in Leo Cunibert Mohlberg, Leo Eizenhöfer, Petrus Siffrin, eds., *Sacramentarium Veronense*, Rerum Ecclesasticarum Documentas, Series maior, Fontes 1 (Rome: Casa Editrice Herder, 1956) where they appear in numerical order. The so-called Veronese Sacramentary (or Leonine Sacramentary) is not a true sacramentary, for it was never used in public worship. Rather, it is a private collection of Roman formularies. The manuscript dates from the first quarter of the seventh century but the prayers in it are dated variously from 400-560 AD (Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 38, 43). See *ibid.*, 38-45 for a description of the codex (Cod. Bibl. Capit. Veron. LXXXV [80]) and a survey of scholarly opinions concerning it.

the two orations from the Veronese collection in the prayers transcribed above, like that of the collect for Saint Henry already examined, is not nearly so strong, even though all three texts do present earthly and heavenly things as potentially or actually in competition for our affections. Whether they go so far as to suggest an opposition that is inconsistent with orthodox Christianity is a subject for a more extensive treatment than can be provided here. What is clear, however, is that the reformers made the antithetical parallelism of the Veronese texts synthetic in the revision by omitting two phrases: (1) *non terrena sapere*, literally, “not to take on the smell/flavor of the things of earth”;²⁷ and (2) *cupiditatibus terrenis expediant*, literally, “they may set [us] free from disordered desires for the things of earth.”

The italicized words in the Paul VI postcommunion are those supplied by the revisers. The words *quibus* and *instituis* are italicized even though different grammatical forms of the same words, *quae* and *instituant*, appear in Veronese 1053 because the change in them significantly alters the theological contours of the prayer. The new theology must be credited to the revisers.

In Veronese 1053, the mysteries cause us to love the things of heaven. In the Paul VI text, the mysteries become instruments by which God causes us to love heavenly things. The new wording fails to do justice to the Catholic belief that sacraments actually cause what they signify. The new oration is ambiguous, permitting but not requiring a purely symbolic view of sacrament. In composing this postcommunion prayer, the revisers began with an oration that unambiguously expresses the Catholic understanding of sacramental efficacy and changed it to an oration with which few Reformation Christians would disagree.²⁸

The modern editors also substituted *ambulantes*, a present participle active, for *constitutos*, a perfect participle passive. This

²⁷ Meaning that we are not to take our inspiration or character from them.

²⁸ The issue here is not whether sacraments are instrumental causes, but whether the oration affirms their efficacy. Aquinas’s understanding of the instrumental causality of sacraments does not preclude their having power to produce sacramental effect—indeed, just the opposite: “if we hold that a sacrament is an instrumental cause of grace, we must needs allow that there is in the sacraments a certain instrumental power of bringing about the sacramental effects” (*STh* III, q. 62, a. 4).

exchanges explicit acknowledgment of a divinely willed condition (placed) for a self-description (walking, living). Like the new collects for Saints Henry and Louis, this new postcommunion calls greater attention to our situation in this world. Here, however, an infelicity is introduced. Those who pray the new prayer inform God about his actions and their own: “by which you cause us, who walk in the midst of passing things, to love heavenly things.”

Example 6

Dumas tells us that the present prayer over the offerings for December 22 was centonized from three different orations, all found in the Veronese collection.

<p>VERONESE 666: COLLECT MONTH OF JULY</p> <p>Auxiliare, Domine, supplicibus tuis, ut opem tuae gratiae consequantur, qui in tua pietate confidunt.</p> <p>—————</p> <p>Aide, O Lord, your suppliants that they may obtain the help of your grace who trust in your mercy.</p>	<p>VERONESE 1261: SECRET BIRTH OF THE LORD</p> <p>Exsultantes, Domine, cum muneribus ad altaria ueneranda concurrimus: quia et omnium nobis hodie summa votorum et causa nostrae redemptionis exorta est.</p> <p>—————</p> <p>Rejoicing, we hasten with gifts to your holy altar, O Lord, for today, the highest of all desires and the cause of our redemption has appeared.</p>	<p>VERONESE 146: SECRET MONTH OF APRIL</p> <p>Tribue nos, domine, quaesumus, donis tuis libera mente servire, ut purificante nos gratia tua, iisdem, quibus famulamur, mysteriis emundemur.</p> <p>—————</p> <p>Grant us, O Lord, we beseech you, to wait upon your gifts with a free mind, that, through your grace purifying us, we may be cleansed by the same mysteries which we serve.</p>
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PAUL VI: PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS DECEMBER 22 In tua pietate confidentes, Domine, cum muneribus ad altaria veneranda concurrimus ut, tua purificante nos gratia, iisdem quibus famulamur mysteriis emundemur.	Trusting in your mercy, O Lord, we hasten with gifts to your holy altar, that, through your grace purifying us, we may be cleansed by the same mysteries which we serve.
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Phrases from each of the Veronese orations were cut and pasted to form the new prayer over the offerings. Only one word underwent a change of form (*confidunt* to *confidentes*) and not a single new word was introduced.

Veronese 1261 contains no petition. Those who pray it state their motive for running to the altar with gifts: the highest of all desires and the cause of redemption has appeared. Still, they ask for nothing. Nor is there an *ut* clause: there is nothing that the faithful expect as they bring their gifts. The Savior's birth and the joy of it have left them both breathless and wanting for nothing; the oration is a burst of pure delight. The Paul VI oration is also without a petition, though the presence of the *ut* clause gives it a somewhat different character. Those who pray the new oration seem more to be informing God of their purpose than to be carried away by sentiments proper to the liturgical moment.

Example 7

The new prayer over the offerings for Ash Wednesday was centonized from two ancient sources, a Gelasian secret and a Bergamese preface.²⁹ The Gelasian oration appears at the beginning of Lent, the Bergamese preface in the Mass immediately before Palm Sunday.

²⁹ The Bergamese Sacramentary is a ninth- or tenth-century Ambrosian or Milanese rite text—that is, it is a Western, non-Roman sacramentary. The manuscript is cited as Bergamo, S. Alessandro in Colonna, *Codex 242* (Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 109, 437).

<p>GELASIAN106: SECRET SUNDAY AT BEGINNING OF LENT</p>	<p>BERGAMESE 454:³⁰ PREFACE</p>	<p>PAUL VI: PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS ASH WEDNESDAY</p>
<p>Sacrificium, Domine, quadragesimalis initii sollemniter immolamus te, Domine, deprecantes, ut cum epularum restrictione carnalium a noxiis quoque voluptatibus temperemur.</p>	<p>Vere dignus . . . aeterne Deus, cuius nos misericordia praevenit ut bene agamus subsequitur ne frustra agamus, accendit intentionem qua ad bona opera peragenda inardescamus tribuit efficaciam qua haec ad perfectum perducere valeamus. Tuam ergo clementiam indefessis vocibus obsecramus, ut nos ieiunii victimis, a peccatis mundatos, ad celebrandam unigeniti filii tui domini nostri passionem facias esse devotos, per quem maiestatem.</p>	<p>Sacrificium quadragesimalis initii sollemniter immolamus, te, Domine, deprecantes, ut per paenitentiae caritatisque labores a noxiis voluptatibus temperemus, et a peccatis mundati, ad celebrandam Filii tui passionem mereamur esse devoti.</p>
<p>_____</p> <p>O Lord, we solemnly offer unto you this sacrifice at the beginning of Lent, imploring, O Lord, that with the restriction of carnal feasting we may also abstain from sinful pleasures.</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>Truly . . . eternal God, whose mercy goes before us that we may act well, follows after lest we act in vain, sets afire intention, by which we may be roused unto the performance of good works, grants power by which we are able bring these to completion. We, therefore, implore your clemency with unwearied voices, that cleansed from sins through the sacrifices of fasting, you may cause us to be faithful in celebrating the passion of your Only-begotten Son our Lord through whom. . .</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>We solemnly offer this sacrifice at the beginning of Lent, imploring you, Lord, that through the labors of penitence and charity we may abstain from sinful pleasures, and, cleansed from sin, we may be able to be faithful in celebrating the passion of your Son.</p>

³⁰ Angelo Paredi, *Sacramentarium Bergomense: Manoscritto del secolo IX della biblioteca di S. Alessandro in Colonna in Bergamo*, VI (Bergamo: Edizioni "Monumenta Bergomense, 1962), 146. The text is from the Mass entitled "*Sabb. in tradit. symbol*" (Saturday for handing on the Creed).

The Gelasian secret begs from God that the fast from food may be accompanied by a like fast from sin. The first half of the Bergamese preface is a hymn to God's mercy that provides the motive for the petition that God cause us, by the fast his mercy inspires and makes possible, to be cleansed from sin and faithful in celebrating the passion of his Son. If we look at what the Paul VI prayer omits or adapts, as well as what it adopts from the Gelasian Sacramentary, we see that restraint in the matter of food is replaced by the labors of penitence and charity, and the preposition "*cum*" by the preposition "*per*." In the Gelasian prayer, it is God who gives the grace of abstaining from sinful pleasures; in the Paul VI text, this comes about through our ascetical labors. Similarly, the word "*facias*" has been omitted from the portion of text adapted from the Bergamese preface. In the preface, God causes us, cleansed of sin, to be faithful in the celebration of his Son's passion; in the Paul VI oration, again it is our ascetical efforts that produce these effects.

The crucial question is whether the Bergamese preface and the Paul VI prayer express the same understanding of agency, or to put it another way, whether the efficacy accorded our labors in the new prayer is the same as that which is attributed to sacrifices of fasting in the older text. The two statements are grammatically equivalent, but do not carry the same weight in their respective contexts. The first part of the Bergamese preface unequivocally affirms that God's grace precedes and accompanies every meritorious deed. The text as a whole acknowledges that salutary acts are both from God and from their human agents. The Paul VI oration, which makes no mention of our need for God's grace, is vague about the graced origins of our striving and its every result. Compared to the source prayers, the Paul VI text has a much weaker and less precise theology of grace.

Example 8

Dumas's last example of a centonized prayer is the new postcommunion for Palm Sunday. Its sources are a collect and

postcommunion from the Mass for Palm Sunday in the Gelasian Sacramentary.

<p>GELASIAN 332: POSTCOMMUNION PALM SUNDAY</p> <p>Sacro munere satiati supplices te, Domine, deprecamur, ut qui debita servitutis celebramus officio, salutationis tuae suscipiamus augmentum.</p> <p>—————</p> <p>Sated with sacred gift, humbly we beseech you, Lord, that we who celebrate in the duty of bounden service may receive an increase of your salvation.</p>	<p>GELASIAN 330: COLLECT PALM SUNDAY</p> <p>Deus, quem diligere et amare iustitia est, ineffabilis gratiae tuae in nobis dona multiplica; ut qui fecisti nos morte Filii tui sperare quod credimus, fac nos eodem resurgente pervenire quod tendimus.</p> <p>—————</p> <p>O God, whom to love and esteem is justice, increase in us the gifts of your ineffable grace, that you who have made us, by the death of your Son, to hope for what we believe, make us, by the rising of the same, to reach that toward which we aim.</p>	<p>PAUL VI: POSTCOMMUNION PALM SUNDAY</p> <p>Sacro munere satiati supplices te, Domine, deprecamur, ut qui fecisti nos morte Filii tui sperare quod credimus, facias nos eodem resurgente pervenire quo tendimus.</p> <p>—————</p> <p>Sated with sacred gift, humbly we beseech you, Lord, that you who have made us, by the death of your Son, to hope for what we believe, may make us, by the rising of the same, to reach whither we aim.</p>
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The verb “aim” is an acceptable but weak rendering of the Latin verb *tendere* which means “to direct oneself” or “to direct the course of one’s life,” as well as to “to stretch” or “to bend.” As such the new and old orations do not simply ask that we reach

our goal, but assume that we are applying ourselves to reaching it both consciously and consistently. The new text is a lovely oration that demonstrates that centonization, risky in itself, can yield impressive results when the theology, not simply the words, of the ancient texts is adroitly incorporated into the new composition.

The revisers also composed new orations by transposing biblical, patristic, and ecclesiastical texts, and, in certain instances, wrote entirely new orations themselves. Dumas's article cites examples of these also, but it would be too great an undertaking to examine them here.

II. PRINCIPLES UNDERGIRDING THE DECISIONS OF THE REDACTORS

A) Accommodating the Modern Mentality

There can be no doubt that correctly identifying the primary principle, and indeed all the principles, that directed the decisions of the reformers, and then accurately assessing both the principles and their application, is a matter of the highest importance. Dumas never explicitly identifies the foremost principle that guided the redactors. He does, however, repeatedly speak of the liturgical reforms accommodating the modern person, contemporary sensibilities, or current historical circumstances.³¹

³¹ See for examples in Dumas, "Les oraisons du nouveau missel romain," ". . . of a Missal that, while it must remain faithful to the Roman style characterized by the complementary qualities of clarity, density, and sobriety, had to open itself to contemporary aspirations—according to the very fruitful directives of Vatican II" (263); "At a more profound level, liturgical texts, no longer failing to recognize the horizontal dimension, have opened themselves to the human preoccupations which constitute the major concern of the Church today" (264); "Without doubt, because of the complexity of our life dominated as it is by industrial technology, these values exert a greater attraction upon our contemporaries for whom the sober harmony of Roman art is prized above the artificial elegance of the Baroque" (265); "In the liturgical renewal, in particular, concern for the truth and simplicity was, for the revisers, imperative from the outset that the texts and the rites may be perfectly—or at least much better—accommodated to the modern mentality to which it must give expression while neglecting nothing of the traditional treasury to which it remains the conduit" (266); "In the oration after the third lesson of the Paschal vigil, slavery 'in Egypt'

His remarks suggest that the revisers labored under the conviction that changes in us and our world had rendered the forms and words of our liturgical rites somewhat obsolete and that these, therefore, needed to be changed. Further, examination of the examples he cites seems to verify this: phrases that were thought to be difficult or shocking for modern persons were corrected or adjusted. Dumas's constantly reiterated concern that the liturgy be "accommodated to the modern mentality" raises the question of whether the primary referent governing the work of the reformers was, in fact, the modern person, or, to express the same possibility in a somewhat different way, whether the reformers understood the task of reform to consist in reshaping the liturgy according to the suppositions of the modern age as they perceived them.

To be clear, the issue is not whether liturgy is historically and culturally conditioned; inevitably it is.³² Nor is the issue whether the liturgy must befit the human beings who celebrate it; surely it must. The liturgy communicates divine realities, the saving fruits of the Paschal Mystery, to human beings in sacramental celebrations that are, like Christ, fully divine and fully human. Liturgical or sacramental rites, therefore, must befit both the divine mysteries and their human recipients. This requires fidelity to the truth of Christ and to what he himself has revealed to us about our human nature. That is, liturgy must embrace and express a view of the human person that accords with gospel revelation.

If the reformers gave priority to the mentality of the age rather than to the justification and sanctification that is accomplished through liturgical incorporation into Christ, or if uncritical

has become 'slavery under Pharaoh' for reasons one can imagine" (268). Also, statements presented earlier in the essay pertain in the present context: "Other texts, having become shocking for the man of today, have been frankly corrected" (267); "On the other hand, it is easy to understand why, in certain collects for Christian leaders, the expression: *culmine imperii* [at the summit of sovereignty] was changed to *cura regiminis* [care of government] (St. Henry), while *terreno regno* [earthly kingdom] gave way to *terreni regiminis cura* [care of earthly government] (Saint Louis): a simple change of perspective for the same reality" (268).

³² Indeed, certain prayers and even whole celebrations, for example the Feast of the Most Holy Rosary, had their origins in historical events.

acceptance of modern philosophy's view of the human person led them to set aside traditional modes of ritual expression in favor of rites and words chosen for congruence with this modern anthropology, then we must consider the possibility that a theological error lies at the very heart of their work.

In short, the primary issue is whether, in assimilating historical, cultural, and even philosophical influences, liturgy brings them under its sovereignty, or the other way round.³³ Establishing whether the reformers, in their practical decisions, granted sovereignty to the liturgical celebration of the Paschal Mystery or, however unwittingly, to the mentality of the age will require careful scrutiny of a great many texts and cannot be undertaken here. My purpose is only to note that accurate identification of the principles that, in fact, guided the decisions of the reformers is the most important issue for further investigation. If a theological error lies at the very heart of the reform, or exerted more or less continual influence upon it, then a complete reexamination of the reform is needed.

B) The Truth of Liturgical Texts: Literal, Historical, and Symbolic

Dumas highly prizes historical accuracy and literal expression.³⁴ This is an issue distinct from, but not altogether

³³ Timothy Vaverek, "Cardinal Newman and Liturgical Development" *Antiphon* 3, no. 2 (1998): 11-17, at 14. Vaverek's article discusses Newman's seven notes for distinguishing development from corruption and applies them to liturgical development.

³⁴ See, for examples, in Dumas, "Les oraisons du nouveau missel romain," under the subheading "historical truth": "[the revisers] of the missal discarded without appeal the recollections of hagiographical legends: the dove of Saint Scholastica, the maritime exploit of Saint Raymond, the miraculous designation of Saint Peter Chrysologus" (264); under the subheading "truth of inspiration and style": "It suffices to declare that we no longer find in the orations mention of fasts that are no longer observed, nor of torrents of tears that were never shed. Many superlatives and excessive adverbs, even if tolerable in Latin, have been pitilessly eliminated (ibid.); under the subheading "simplicity": "It suffices, therefore, that each prayer express the main point of its content without repetition or detours, submissive to the principles required for a good homily: to have something to say, to know how to say it, and to stop after it has been said" and "the elimination of . . . types of prayers which in other respects are inclined to be obscure or tedious when accurately rendered into modern languages" (265); under the subheading "adaptation," something we quoted above: "from whence the antithetical couplet oft repeated in the old missal: *terrena despiciere et amare*

unrelated to, the matter addressed in the preceding section. Indeed, some of the same sentences could be cited in both connections. Here, however, we are interested not in why texts were changed but how they were changed—that is, what kinds of things were included and excluded, and what modes of expression were accepted and rejected.

After remarking that the list of things emended out of concern for the “truth of inspiration and style” is too long for him to itemize, Dumas gives two examples: “we no longer find in the orations mention of fasts that are no longer observed, nor of torrents of tears that were never shed.”³⁵ The two, evidently, are representative types of a great number of different changes. In presenting them together under a single heading Dumas, I believe, conflates two issues. The first is whether the truth of an oration depends upon its reflecting the actual situation of those who pray. The second is whether truth requires that language always be used literally.

Paul VI changed the laws on fasting so that those between the ages of 21 and 59 ceased to be bound under pain of mortal sin to fast on all the weekdays of Lent.³⁶ Only two days of obligatory fast remain: Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, though according to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* fasting itself remains one of the principal forms of penance in Christian life.³⁷ The word “fast,” whether appearing as a noun or a verb (*ieiunium* and *ieiunare*), is found three times in orations of the Paul VI Missal; two of these are in texts used exclusively on Ash Wednesday.³⁸

caelestia, which, though a right understanding is possible, is very easily badly translated” (267); and “changes the expression: *non gravemur externis*, difficult to understand, to: *fraterna dimittere studeamus*” (268).

³⁵ Ibid., 264: “Qu’il suffice d’assurer que l’on ne trouve plus, dans les oraisons, mention des jeûnes qui ne sont plus observés ni des torrents de larmes qui ne furent versés.”

³⁶ “*Paenitemini*” (Apostolic Constitution on Penance, 17 February 1966), *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 58, no. 3 (31 March 1966): 184.

³⁷ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2d ed. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000), para. 1434. The other two are almsgiving and prayer.

³⁸ Schnitker and Slaby, eds., *Concordantia verbalia missalis romani*, col. 1138. “*Ieiunium*” appears in the collect and postcommunion for Ash Wednesday; it also appears in the collect for the third Sunday of Lent. In addition, “*ieiunium*” is found in two prefaces: the proper preface for the first Sunday of Lent and the fourth Lenten preface.

The new missal uses the word solely in reference to fasting from food. The word “fast” appears thirty-six times in the orations of the 1962 Missal, where it is used in reference to both fasting from food and fasting from vice.³⁹

Dumas sees the change as required by “concern for the truth.”⁴⁰ He evidently assumes that truth requires orations to reflect the circumstances of the praying community. It is not the nature of liturgical prayer, however, simply to reflect the congregation’s situation. Rather, the prayers of the liturgy place appropriate sentiments on our lips and in our hearts and minds, and present us with ideals to which we are meant to aspire, and which we are called by God to attain, even as they give us words to plead from God the grace of attaining them.

Therefore, to omit mention of fasting in our liturgical texts simply because we are no longer obliged to rigorous fasting under pain of serious sin seems not to be a matter of truth, but of excessive literalism. The twofold effect is that liturgical prayer fails to present us with a full picture of how we ought to be living and permits us to forget that a supererogatory fast is a great good.

According to Dumas, “concern for the truth” manifested itself in changes to a great many texts besides those that contained references to fasting. His declaration invites further examination of the missal so that we may become aware of all the ways in which the orations have been adjusted to fit the circumstances of the faithful and of how these adjustments, in turn, have changed the liturgical depiction of Christian life and practice.

Dumas also tells us that the editors excised the mention of “torrents of tears that were never shed.” Weeping is a physical act, but it also describes a spiritual state—namely, that of contrition and repentance. “Torrents of tears” is a figurative way

³⁹ André Pflieger, *Liturgicae orationis concordantia verba, prima pars: Missale romanum* (Rome: Herder, 1964), 293-94. The actual number of prayers is thirty-four, but two of them are used twice. A prayer that speaks of fasting from vice follows the lesson from Micah on Ember Saturday in September: “Grant us, we beseech you, O Lord, so to abstain from bodily feasting that we may likewise fast from (our) besetting vices” (“Praesta quaesumus, Domine, sic nos ab epulis abstinere carnalibus: ut a vitiis irruentibus pariter jejunemus”).

⁴⁰ For another explanation see Augé, “Le collete del proprio del tempo nel nuovo messale,” 288-89.

of naming that state. Similarly, Dumas tells us that “In the oration after the third lesson of the Paschal vigil, slavery ‘in Egypt’ has become slavery ‘under Pharaoh’ for reasons that one can imagine.”⁴¹ This prayer is the eleventh and last that we shall examine. It reads:

1962 MISSAL: ORATION AFTER THE FOURTH PROPHECY OF THE PASCHAL VIGIL⁴²

<p>Deus, cuius antiqua miracula etiam nostris temporibus coruscare sentimus, dum, quod <u>uni populo</u> a persecutione <u>Aegyptiaca</u> liberando dexteræ tuæ potentia contulisti, id in salutem <u>gentium</u> per aquam regenerationis operaris, praesta, ut in <u>Abrahae filios</u> et in <u>Israeliticam</u> dignitatem totius mundi transeat plenitudo.</p>	<p>O God, whose miracles of old we perceive to shine forth even in our own times, since what you granted to <u>one people</u> in freeing them from <u>Egyptian</u> persecution with the power of your right arm, that you worked unto the salvation of the <u>nations</u> through the water of regeneration; grant that the fullness of the whole world may pass into the <u>sons of Abraham</u> and the honor of <u>Israel</u> [literally Israelite worthiness].</p>
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The actual phrase in the 1962 Missal, then, is “*a persecutione Aegyptiaca*,” that is, from Egyptian persecution, not “slavery in Egypt.” In the Paul VI Missal, it becomes “*a persecutione Pharaonis*,” from the persecution of Pharaoh. The images of the original oration are all national and are played off against one another in couplets: one people/the nations // Egyptian/Israelite. God’s act that sets one people free from another people is repeated, in a greatly heightened sense, for all nations in the waters of baptism. The prayer recalls that salvation passed from one nation to the whole world, and begs that the fullness of salvation granted in Christ may now pass, as it were, back into

⁴¹ Dumas, “Les oraisons du nouveau missal romain,” 268: “Dans les oraisons de la Vigile pascale, après la 3me lecture, la servitude ‘en Egypte’ est devenue la servitude ‘sous Pharaon’ pour les raisons que l’on devine.”

⁴² The third lesson of the Paschal Vigil in the Paul VI lectionary and the fourth lesson in the 1962 Missal are both from Exodus 14-15. Both are followed, except for the differences noted in the body of the essay, by the same oration.

the people who were the first to experience God's saving acts: the people of Israel. To change "Egyptian" to "of Pharaoh" not only disturbs the parallelism and poetry of the prayer, it betrays a literalism that expects very little of the faithful by way of knowledge of salvation history, spiritual imagination, or capacity for nonliteral modes of expression. If the faithful are so poorly prepared for full, active, and conscious participation in liturgical celebrations, the appropriate remedy is sound catechesis. Lowering the level of a liturgical text only lowers the level of participation that it makes possible because it correspondingly diminishes the capacity of the text to engage us.

Dumas's remarks about both tears and Pharaoh, as well as the fact that the new missal restricts its use of the word "fast" to the physical fast from bodily nourishment,⁴³ raise the question of whether the reformers shied away from symbolic forms of expression to a significant degree.⁴⁴ If so, a great number of questions arise in consequence. Fully exploring the ramifications would require the help of scholars with diverse areas of expertise: anthropology, liturgy, philosophy, theology, art, and literature, to name the most obvious.

CONCLUSION

Our examination of the revisions to the Roman Missal has been confined to the orations that Antoine Dumas, an advisor to the *Consilium* and member of the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, presented to us for study. In examining only eleven of

⁴³ Use of the word "fast" in reference to vice has a long history; it is prominent already in the writings of the fifth-century monk John Cassian (e.g., *De institutis* V.10-11 and 21-22).

⁴⁴ The likelihood of this seems confirmed by two other examples, although they are of a different order because they do not involve orations and are not mentioned by Dumas. One pertains to the lectionary and the other to the psalter. In the 1962 Missal, the first Scripture lesson in the Masses for the evangelists Matthew and Mark is Ezekiel 1:10-14, the text that names the four living creatures, man, lion, ox, and eagle, that became the symbols of the four evangelists. In the new lectionary, Ezekiel 1:10-14 is not used at all—even though the lectionary was specifically designed to broaden the faithful's liturgical exposure to the Word of God, and the passage itself continues to exert noteworthy iconographic influence in our churches. The second example is the decision to remove the "cursing psalms" from the psalm cycle of the Liturgy of the Hours.

approximately fifteen hundred orations, and these somewhat rapidly, we have not, obviously, established anything at all about the character or quality of the orations in the new missal. These eleven orations, however, were put forward by Dumas as illustrative of the principles of revision, and for this reason merit close attention.

Common to all eleven is a presentation of Christian life in which nothing threatens well-being in Christ or casts a shadow of any sort. Only two words in the revised orations suggest that things are sometimes difficult. The first is “*studeamus*” of “*fraterna dimittere studeamus*” in the prayer over the offerings for the third Sunday of Lent (example 1, above). The verb *studere* has a range of meanings extending from “try” and “strive” to “be eager to” and “be zealous for.” The second is the word “*labores*” in the prayer over the offerings for Ash Wednesday (example 7, above). *Labor* in Latin is a strong word which the English cognate “labor” does not quite equal, for the Latin generally describes work that brings forth sweat. Apart from these two examples, about which it could be argued that functional equivalents are supplied in the revisions, all the actual or potential difficulties of Christian life named in the source texts have been excised from the new ones. For the prayers we have examined these are: spiritual dangers posed by the sins of non-Christians, attacks from diabolic incursions, human frailty, worldly enticements, and disordered desires.

Authentic Christian life is never without its hardships in this world. We have promised in Baptism to die with Christ, and dying is not easy. The tendency to exclude mention of difficulties that we all experience in the nature of things seems especially ill-advised because the matter at issue is not polite conversation, in which it is sometimes wiser not to mention unpleasant things, but prayer to our Lord. If we fail to speak of such things to him, we also fail to seek his help with them.

Excising mention of things that pose dangers to spiritual well-being includes the practice of editing orations so that they present the things of this world in a neutral or wholly positive light. Dumas, in his discussion of “*terrena despiciere et amare caelestia,*”

identifies “the modern mentality and the directives of Vatican II” as the two reasons for revisions of this kind. Nowhere in his essay, however, does he explicitly name either the directives of the council or the aspects of the modern mentality that he judges to have required such revisions. This raises an important question for further study: whether the Fathers of Vatican II actually modified Church teaching about the Christian’s relationship to the things of this world in a way that required amendment to our liturgical texts, and, if so, whether the actual changes made to the prayers implemented the revised teaching with appropriate nuance.

An important doctrinal issue presents itself in the new postcommunion for the first Sunday of Advent. Comparison with its source (Veronese 1053) reveals that the Paul VI oration forsakes a clearly worded Catholic sacramental theology for something that, in its vagueness, is utterly consistent with much Protestant sacramental thought. This raises a question that has significant pastoral implications and, therefore, merits further investigation: whether the fullness of Catholic truth expressed in the original orations was preserved in the revisions. Orations which are found to have suffered losses in this respect need to be restored, and their deficiencies supplied by sound catechesis in the meantime.

The centonized prayer over the offerings for Ash Wednesday is a second example in which the fullness of Catholic truth is not preserved in the new oration. The theological issue here is the Catholic doctrine of grace. In his essay, Dumas writes: “We are able to say that henceforth liturgical prayer helps us better to understand that the kingdom of God is constructed here below out of humble human realities.”⁴⁵ This statement, while amenable to orthodox interpretation, does not tell the whole story. Humble human realities cannot attain to, never mind be the raw material for, the kingdom of God unless God’s grace, as the Bergamese preface puts it, “goes before us that we may act well, follows after

⁴⁵ Dumas, “Les oraisons du nouveau missel romain,” 264: “On peut dire que, désormais, la prière liturgique aide mieux à comprendre que le royaume de Dieu se construit ici-bas, à partir des humbles réalités humaines.”

lest we act in vain, sets afire intention, by which we may be roused unto the performance of good works, and grants power by which we are able bring these to completion.” Christian faith tells us that humble human nature is called to an end infinitely beyond the scope of its natural powers, nothing less than everlasting interpersonal communion with the Blessed Trinity, and that it is made capable of reaching this end solely by divine grace. Dumas’s failure to mention God’s grace is the more grave in the context we cite precisely because he is stipulating a principle that guided the reform. Furthermore, this principle, with its theological defect uncorrected, seems to have guided the centonization process that excised mention of God’s work as the new prayer over the offerings for Ash Wednesday was stitched together from the older texts. The very important question that arises in this connection is to what extent the failure to give due acknowledgment to the need for God’s grace permeates the new missal, for the faithful are ill-served by prayers of a Pelagian hue.

In three of the examples we saw that the literary devices that give depth, beauty, and polish to the original orations—indeed, that draw us into their abundance—do not appear in the revised texts. Nor were we able to discover comparable compositional sophistication in the new orations. This is no small matter. Form and content are intrinsically united in all literary composition; together they are the text and, because we are incarnate spirits, together they engage us. On this account, it seems likely that redactions which lower the literary quality of liturgical texts correspondingly diminish their capacity to draw the faithful into full, active, and conscious participation.⁴⁶ This, together with the editorial practice of excising phrases or concepts that are “difficult to understand,” raises several questions for scholars to pursue: whether the faithful are drawn to fuller participation by prayers of unexceptional literary quality or by those of greater sophistication and beauty; whether the faithful are more actively engaged by prayers whose full meaning is immediately comprehensible or by those whose depths continue to unfold as

⁴⁶ Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 14.

they are heard again and again; whether the prayers of the new missal foster greater participation than those of its predecessor. These questions are raised solely in reference to the Latin texts; the accessibility provided by vernacular translations has no bearing on them.

The traditional Roman orations are highly sophisticated and stunningly concise literary compositions that overflow with surplus of meaning—connotation far outstripping denotation. In his classic essay “The Genius of the Roman Rite,” Edmond Bishop says of them: “the ideas are as simple and elementary as the expression is pregnant and precise.”⁴⁷ Dumas, however, tells us that liturgical orations should be “submissive to the principles required for a good homily: to have something to say, to know how to say it, and to stop after it has been said.”⁴⁸ It is difficult to harmonize the two descriptions. Further, the classic Roman orations do not have those who pray them inform God about themselves—something observed in two of the orations that we examined. These are, perhaps, hints that a new, or at least very different, understanding of the nature and function of the orations may have exerted an influence upon the *Consilium*’s work. Liturgical prayer forms the faithful theologically and spiritually. If the new and revised orations are significantly different from those of the older missals, then it is possible that the faithful are now receiving a significantly different theological and spiritual formation. This is another area for scholars to evaluate.

Both in Dumas’s remarks and in the changes he cites a number of shifts are clearly discernible: toward literalism, toward rationalism, toward an historical approach to liturgy that puts the modern person at the center, and away from such things as

⁴⁷ Edmond Bishop, “The Genius of the Roman Rite,” in *Liturgica Historica: Papers on the Liturgy and Religious Life of the Western Church* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1918), 3. I am grateful to Neil J. Roy of The Catholic University of America for suggesting that I quote Bishop in this context.

⁴⁸ Dumas, “Les oraisons du nouveau missel romain,” 265: “obéissant aux principes requis pour une bonne homélie : avoir quelque chose à dire, savoir le dire, s’arrêter après l’avoir dit.”

miraculous events⁴⁹ and symbolic or non-literal expression. These tendencies, clearly evident in such a small sampling of texts, reflect Enlightenment preoccupations and presuppositions. They raise the question of whether Enlightenment presuppositions have shaped our new liturgical books and rites, and, if so, in what ways, to what extent, and with what effect—all issues that merit exploration by scholars with the requisite philosophical and theological competencies.

It is likely that, for those who have the eyes to see such things, every liturgical text manifests the grace and glory, and bears the smudge and smell, of the age that produced it. The Paul VI Missal presents an anomaly for, as we have seen, the reformers revised the texts of every age. In consequence, and this needs to be confirmed or contradicted by careful objective examination, it may be the case that nearly all the texts of our missal reflect the strengths and weaknesses, the insights and biases, the achievements and the limitations of but one age, our own—as the anachronistic collects for Saints Henry and Louis certainly do. If this is indeed so, then Catholics of today, in spite of the access made possible by vernacular celebrations, have far less liturgical exposure to the wisdom of our past and the wondrous diversity of Catholic experience and tradition than did the Catholics of earlier generations.

The work of the liturgical reform, as Dumas reminds us, was enormous beyond imagining and accomplished in a very short period of time. We owe those who labored to produce the new texts a debt of gratitude. One way to express that gratitude is to study their work well—not only the final product of their labors,

⁴⁹ For example, “the revisers . . . of the missal discarded without appeal the recollections of hagiographical legends: the dove of Saint Scholastica, the maritime exploit of Saint Raymond, the miraculous designation of Saint Peter Chrysologus” (“les réviseurs . . . ont écarté sans appel les réminiscences de légendes hagiographiques : colombe de saint Scholastique, exploit maritime de saint Raymond, désignation miraculeuse de saint Pierre Chrysologue”) (ibid., 264); and “In the sanctoral prayers we have avoided all excessive justification, all recalling of famous feats which are common to many (foundations, miracles, etc)” (“Dans le sanctoral, on a évité toute apologie excessive, tout rappel de faits notoires et communs à plusieurs [fondations, miracles, etc]”) (ibid.).

but the work itself—so it might be better understood and appreciated, as well as refined, corrected, and perfected.