

Press Interview with Cardinal Castrillón Hoyos
Goring Hotel, London, Saturday 14 June 2008

The Extraordinary Form is Progress

In the morning of Saturday 14 June, before speaking to the LMS's AGM, Cardinal Castrillón Hoyos gave a press conference at the Goring Hotel, close to Westminster Cathedral. He again stressed some key points - that the juridical meaning of the Holy Father's *Motu Proprio* remains to be fully understood, that its purpose is the re-introduction of the Extraordinary Form in all the parishes and that it represents true progress and not a 'going back'. He also offered a pointed clarification of the term "stable group".

Journalists present were Damian Thompson of The Daily Telegraph and The Catholic Herald, Anna Arco of The Catholic Herald, Elena Curti of The Tablet and Sebastian Tong of Reuters. John Medlin of the LMS represented The Times and moderated the conference. Also present were Fr Andrew Wadsworth to help with interpretation and Mgr Luciano Alimandi, Secretary to Cardinal Castrillón Hoyos.

The Tablet: Your Eminence, I'd like to ask what you make of the response of the Bishops of England and Wales to the Pope's *Motu Proprio*.

Cardinal Castrillón (CC): It's a good one. There are some problems because it's a new way of celebrating liturgy and they need time to prepare priests and catechists to understand the Extraordinary Form.

Reuters: In some parts of the world there is resistance by local bishops to allowing the faithful the freedom to celebrate the Extraordinary Form. What do you recommend that the faithful do?

CC: Be informed! Bishops and faithful do not understand the meaning of the *Motu Proprio*. Many of the difficulties come because they don't know the reality of the Gregorian Rite - this is the just name for the Extraordinary Form, because this Mass was never prevented, never. Today for many bishops it is difficult because they don't have priests who know Latin. Many seminaries give very few hours to Latin - not enough to give the necessary preparation to celebrate the Extraordinary Form well.

Others think that the Holy Father is going against the Second Vatican Council. That is absolute ignorance. The Fathers of the Council never celebrated a Mass other than the Gregorian one. It [the *Novus Ordo*] came after the Council... The Holy Father, who is a theologian and who was in the preparation for the Council, is acting exactly in the way of the Council, offering with freedom the different kinds of celebration. This celebration, the Gregorian one, was the celebration of the Church during more than a thousand years. Most of our saints grew out of this rite.

Others say one cannot celebrate with the back to the people. This is ridiculous. The Eucharist is offered to the Father. The Son of God has sacrificed Himself to the Father, with His face to the Father. It is not against the people. It is for the people. To face east is not lack of courtesy to the people.

Daily Telegraph: Your Eminence, would the Holy Father like to see ordinary parishes in England and Wales introduced to the Gregorian Rite?

CC: Yes, it is necessary. We cannot celebrate this without knowledge of the language, of the signs, of the ways of the Rite, and some institutions of the Church are helping, for instance the Latin Mass Society's training conference for priests at Merton College, Oxford.

Daily Telegraph: So would the Pope like to see many ordinary parishes making provision for the Gregorian Rite?

CC: All the parishes. Not many - all the parishes, because this is a gift of God. He offers these riches, and it is very important for new generations to know the past of the Church. This kind of worship is so noble, so beautiful - the deepest theologians' way to express our faith. The worship, the music, the architecture, the painting, makes a whole that is a treasure. The Holy Father offers to all the people this possibility, not only the groups who demand it, but so that everybody knows this way of celebrating the Eucharist in the Catholic Church.

Catholic Herald: Would you like to see all the seminaries in England and Wales teach the seminarians how to celebrate in the Extraordinary Form?

CC: I would like it, and it will be necessary. Ecclesia Dei is writing to the seminaries to make deep preparation not only for the Rite, but for [teaching] the theology, the philosophy, the Latin language.

Daily Telegraph: What would be the practical steps for ordinary parishes [to prepare for the Gregorian Rite]?

CC: The parish priest should select an hour on Sundays to celebrate the Mass, and prepare the community with catechesis to understand it, to appreciate the power of the silence, the power of the sacred way in front of God, the deep theology, to discover how and why the priest represents the person of Christ and to pray with the priest.

The Tablet: Your Eminence, I think many Catholics are rather confused by this new emphasis on the Tridentine Rite, mainly because we were taught that the new Rite represented real progress, and many of us who have grown up with it see it as real progress, that there are Eucharistic ministers, women on the sanctuary, that we are all priests, prophets and kings. This new emphasis to many of us seems to deny that.

CC: What is progress? '*Progredire*' means [offering] the best to God... I am surprised, because many young people are enthusiastic about the celebration of the Gregorian Rite.

The Tablet: In the *Motu Proprio*, the Pope's emphasis is on one rite and two forms, and he describes the Tridentine Rite as "extraordinary". Extraordinary therefore means exceptional, not something that we celebrate every Sunday.

CC: Not "exceptional". Extraordinary means "not ordinary", not "exceptional."

The Tablet: Should it therefore supersede the new Rite? Should we go back?

CC: It is not going back: it is taking a treasure which is present, but was not provided.

Daily Telegraph: There is great enthusiasm among younger Catholics for the Extraordinary Form and they are deeply grateful to the Holy Father.

CC: Progress is important but what is it? Progress is discovering contemplation. Silence is needed. A person who has no time for silence is a poor person. The Holy Mass is sacrifice - Golgotha, Calvary, the Cross of Christ - contemplate this. This is freedom, redemption. This Victim will be our Judge. Sacrifice first, the meal afterwards.

The Tablet: Can this not be expressed in the new rite?

CC: Yes, but the forty years experience has not always been good. Many abandoned the sense of adoration. We are brothers but not saved as brothers. The sacrifice saves us. The mystery saves us. We sing because we are brothers. We sing because we are celebrating, but we keep silent because we are in front of the mystery. The new rite can express this, but so many abuses led to people and children abandoning the Mass and the Church. The Extraordinary Form is a Mass of signs, of the presence of God, of progress!

Reuters: What can people do when bishops say, "no"?

CC: Christ is our reference. The Eucharist is the highest expression of the love of Christ. It should not be a confrontation between bishops, priests, laity and Rome. The application of the Second Vatican Council took many years. In some cases it has still not happened! Introducing the *Motu Proprio* will take time, understanding it will take time. The Holy Father is not returning to the past; he is taking a treasure from the past to offer it alongside the rich celebration of the new rite. The second Eucharistic prayer of the new rite is actually the oldest one [in the Church's liturgy]. It is not a matter of confrontation but of fraternal dialogue and efforts to understand. The two rites should enrich each other.

Daily Telegraph: Will there be a clarification of the *Motu Proprio*?

CC: Not exactly a clarification, but of matters treated in the *Motu Proprio*, such as the calendar, ordinations to the sub-diaconate, the way of using vestments, the Eucharistic fast.

Daily Telegraph: Have we gone beyond the "stable group"?

CC: It's a matter of common sense. In every bishop's household there is a chapel and there are maybe three or four persons. This is a stable group... It is not possible to give two persons a Mass, but two here, two there, two elsewhere - they can have it. They are a stable group.

Daily Telegraph: From different parishes?

CC: No problem! This is our world. Managers of enterprises don't live in one place, but they are a stable group.

Reuters: When will the clarification be published?

CC: I don't know. The Holy Father has all the problems of the world to consider as well as the question of the Extraordinary Form.

Daily Telegraph: A year after the *Motu Proprio* there are very few extra Sunday Masses. Can we expect more next year?

CC: Gradually.

Reuters: What progress has been made with the question of the SSPX?

CC: We are in dialogue with them, beginning from AD 2000. They want the possibility of the Mass for every parish - now they have it. They want the excommunications lifted. The Holy Father is studying this.

Catholic Herald: Has the liberation of the Extraordinary Form made the problems between the Church and the SSPX more pointed? I mean, are the differences theological?

CC: The question is, who has the Magisterium? The Pope or the SSPX bishops?

Reuters: Are we far from a reconciliation with the SSPX?

CC: I have great hope because many people committed to the SSPX want full communion with the Pope. Many SSPX priests want this also. The problems which the SSPX have with aspects of the Second Vatican Council can be treated inside the Church. The SSPX are not denying any articles of the Faith.

LMS: Six years ago, the Traditional priests of Campos, Brazil reconciled with the Church. What is your opinion as to how things have settled down?

CC: As a Colombian, I thought there might be many difficulties with the reconciliation in Brazil. But no problems! None. The priests of Campos work in complete cooperation with the other dioceses.

The Tablet: You mentioned abuses in the new rite post-Vatican II. What are they?

CC: So many. Priests celebrating in clown's clothing with a wig and painted lips - a travesty. A priest celebrating Sunday Mass wearing a mini skirt. Another priest who invited a Protestant minister to celebrate the Eucharist. And another who introduced his wife and sons before celebrating Mass. There is an atmosphere which makes for abuses and that must be changed. In my poor opinion the new presence of the Gregorian Rite will help us to take seriously the identity of our Faith, respecting all the other ways of thinking but keeping strongly our identity with Christ, with Christ in Calvary, with Christ in Golgotha, with Christ offering His blood for our salvation."

And with that His Excellency brought the interview to an end. Thanks were given, the ring was kissed and the Cardinal returned to his hotel room to change for the short journey to Westminster Cathedral Hall to address the LMS's AGM.

<http://www.latin-mass-society.org/2008/cardinalcastrillonpressconf.html>