

Motu Proprio – I

July 7, 2007

The long-awaited *Motu Proprio* of Benedict XVI, due to partly set free what is known as the Tridentine rite of Mass, should be published tomorrow (July 7). Here are four questions on the subject, and the answers which I gave six months ago (*Rivarol* is a French periodical):

Rivarol: It is said that Benedict XVI is about to set free the traditional rite of Mass. Will this measure be enough to solve the crisis in the Church? Bishop W.: I may be wrong, but I think that even just a partial setting free of the traditional Mass would be a great step forward for the universal Church. The powerful grace contained in the Mass, presently strangled as it were by the rite of Paul VI, would start to flow again all over the world. However, it would take much more than just restoring the true rite of Mass to solve the crisis of faith in the Church.

Rivarol: But will not this “Motu Proprio” end up by creating more confusion than clarity in the area of doctrine? Bishop W.: Precisely, it is not by merely allowing once more the true rite of Mass that Catholics would learn again how to attend it as they should. Everything needs to be re-built, so there would indeed, to begin with, be a great deal of confusion, for instance hybrid Masses. But the re-building must start somewhere, and I think we need to trust in the intrinsic power of the true rite.

Rivarol: Don’t traditional Catholics risk melting into Conciliar parishes at the expense of the integral Faith? Bishop W.: If following on the setting free of the true rite, traditional Catholics were to blend back into Conciliar parishes, one would have to ask if they ever had the integral Faith. It is the Faith which is at stake. Therefore it would be up to the leaders of Catholic Tradition to form their flock

in advance, in such or way that the Motu Proprio would do more good to the Conciliarists than harm to the Traditionalists. This would require the latter to understand clearly that the basic problem is the whole of the Catholic Faith, and not just the rite of Mass.

Rivarol: Would not setting free the traditional Mass without abolishing the Novus Ordo Mass mean accepting in principle the co-existence and equal worth of what Archbishop Lefebvre called "The Mass of All Time" and the "Mass of Luther"? Bishop W.: "Ab inimico disce," learn from your enemy, said the Latins. Why are so many Conciliar bishops in uproar at the mere possibility of the true rite of Mass being set free? Is it not because they know that if the Ark of the Alliance is allowed into their temples again, their rites of Dagon are in peril? (Read Chapter V of the first book of Samuel!) Are we with our rite of Pius V to be more afraid than they are with their rite of Paul VI?

Rightly or wrongly, these are still the answers I would give to the same questions. Time will tell.

Kyrie eleison.