



Book Review
Organic Development of the Liturgy
Alcuin Reid
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The catholic church, started by Jesus of Nazareth, is over 2,000 years old. It was handed to Men. Men are flawed. The catholic church bears the mark of those flaws throughout history. Nevertheless, we have been assured by Christ himself that The Church, the Catholic Church, will receive divine guidance and, *in the end*, the gates of hell shall not prevail against The Church:

Matthew Chapter 16 (18-19):

And I say to thee: That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.

The Lord himself states he will *build* his church using Peter as the foundational human. To "build" is a verb. Nowhere does God state that His church was given to Man as a completed gift. Throughout history as evidenced in the Old and New Testament, we see that God slowly reveals himself to us in a manner that develops our understanding. That is, Man's understanding of God, and our relationship to God has been slowly evolving, and continues to so do. However, our knowledge *builds*, it does not *innovate*. That is "Tradition," spoken or written.

"Therefore, brethren, stand fast; and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word, or by our epistle." -2nd Epistle of St Paul to the Thessalonians, Chapter 2, verse 15.

Development means change and change means conflict. Even a cursory reading of the New Testament reveals the conflicts and arguments amongst the Apostles themselves as to the nuances of the development of what Jesus taught.

Recently, with the advent of the rise of Ultramontanism in the middle of the 19th Century, we saw an introduction of a patently anti-historical argument of the absolute power of the Bishop of Rome, the Pope. Some modern apologists in popular culture attempt to argue that this unbounded power ensures that no errors will be made by a Pope in the context of Papal infallibility and to argue to the contrary is to call Jesus a liar.¹ Such a position requires the speaker to go down a complex road of hyper-convoluted arguments that end in multiple contradictions and the need to have double meanings to words that change as the needs change to support the argument. Although no Pope has made an infallible statement since 1950, listening to the Modernist Catholic, you would think that Catholics are required to hang on to, and accept every teaching the comes from the lips of the Pope. Just not true.

Indeed, history demonstrates differently- Paul correctly opposed the teachings of the first catholic Pope, Pope Peter; the various writing to the Romans and Corinthians contains doctrinal corrections and clarifications as Man deviated from the course, and needed to be put straight by authoritative Fathers. (Occasionally, some men have gone completely off the rails and rejected Christianity and through their own pride have invented their own religions loosely based on Christianity.²)

Throughout history, the litany of errors by various Popes is long and includes Popes that have lead corrupt lives, Popes who have made terrible prudential judgements, and Popes who have taught heresy.

"These examples of human weakness are rare on the chair of Saint Peter; but history records them, and the Church's children have no reason to cover them up, since they know that He who has assured the Roman Pontiffs of infallibility in teaching of the faith, has not at all protected them from every defect in the exercise of the exercise of the supreme government."³

Yet, the thread that runs through the Church is the core teachings as seen in the multitude of legitimate catholic expressions found in the Eastern Orthodox, and those in communion with Rome such as the Chaldean Catholic Church, the Syro-Malabar, Syro-Malankara, Maronite, Melkite, Braga, etc. That is catholicity, and it is legitimately expressed in many liturgies.

Reid's book explores those developments in the Roman Rite from about 590 AD to the dawn of Vatican II. He does not address any other rite except in the context of the Latin Rite. In his discussion, he is careful to distinguish the "objective" and "subjective" natures of the liturgy. The objective is that which is the essence of the liturgy, the subjective is the accidental forms which may evolve "organically."

¹ David Anders, PhD.

² The list is long: The False Prophet Muhammad, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, Henry VIII of England, Billy Graham, John Nelson Darby, Joseph Smith and others.

³ Guéranger P., *Institutions liturgiques* (1883)

The reason Reid stops at the dawn of Vatican II is made clear by the events discussed up to that point, the seeds of innovation were already being planted by subversives such as Annibale Bugnini. Reid identifies the false arguments of the time used by the innovators to push their heretical agenda, namely:

- 1) The laity are too stupid to understand the Mass – we need to dumb it down to their level, which is a low standard indeed.
- 2) The laity are too crass to appreciate the beauty and holiness of the Mass, we need to sterilize it and make it as banal as possible for their sake, otherwise we are just casting pearls before swine.
- 3) Since nobody speaks Latin anymore, nobody knows what is going on in the Mass.
- 4) If we dumb-down the liturgy, more people will come to Mass.
- 5) The laity think the Mass is irrelevant, and we need to make it hip and cool so it's relevant to the Modern Man, who is also hip and cool.
- 6) The laity are not actively participating in the Mass. We need to give them something to do while they are here.

And the biggest lie of all:

- 7) The laity want these changes.

Reid lays out the players, their contributions, their ideas and what they *really* wanted, vs. what they got. Many of the most radical innovators weren't really that radical when compared to the abominable Novus Ordo "Mass." However, with only a few exceptions, they would have been horrified to see how their "Liturgical Movement" was hijacked by Freemasons, Protestants and Communists to produce the "Clown Masses" "Swimsuit Masses" "Basketball Masses" and the multitude of other abuses now seen in the Roman "Catholic" Church.

Many Traditionalists will be surprised to learn of some of the liturgical alterations made by none other than Pope Saint Pius X himself.

Importantly, Reid addresses the adverse effect that Ultramontanism has had on how we now perceive the power of the Pope compared to how we, as Catholics, have traditionally perceived the Pope (and what we should return to). In short, Reid helps the interested historian to understand why, in the spirit of *sentire cum ecclesia*, the "spirit of Vatican II" is a lie.

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