



OFFICE OF
THE ARCHBISHOP

August 10, 2007

Dear Father:

Worship of God "for the praise and glory of his name," as well as "for the good of all the Church opens us to communion with Christ." These references from the General Instruction of the Roman Missal are specifically cited in the opening of Pope Benedict XVI's recent *motu proprio* titled *Summorum Pontificum*. This same liturgical theology also forms the basis of the Holy Father's accompanying letter sent with the *motu proprio* to me and my brother bishops.

Both the *motu proprio* and the accompanying letter regard the use of Pope John XXIII's publication of the 1962 Roman Missal. Because of the importance of these documents, I want to write you directly and share with you my own thoughts and reflections.

When I became bishop, I selected the motto, "*Bread of Life, Sign of Faith*," because it not only reflected my own personal and academic passion for reverent celebration of the sacraments but the deep desire I have to engage in the liturgical renewal of the Church, which has been such an important part of my many years as priest and bishop.

This is why I was heartened to read the manner in which the Holy Father cites the reverence and gratitude of his predecessor, Pope John Paul II, for the Church's efforts at liturgical renewal:

"...the Second Vatican Council expressed the desire that with due respect and reverence for divine worship it be restored and adapted to the needs of our age."

As the Second Vatican Council in its Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy Article 1 states:

"The Sacred Council has several aims in view: it desires to impart an ever increasing vigor to the Christian life of the faithful; to adapt more suitably to the needs of our own time those institutions that are subject to change; to foster whatever can promote union among all people in Christ; to strengthen whatever can help to call the whole of humanity into the household of the Church."

At the same time, the Church's rule of prayer (*lex orandi*) is a witness to unchanged faith and unbroken tradition regardless of the introduction of new liturgical practices flowing from the renewal of the Second Vatican Council. This is why the *motu proprio* is so rich in references to the spiritual Fathers of the Church as well as the previous pontiffs who have promulgated various editions of the Roman Missal through Church history.

Because of Pope Benedict XVI's attention to a theology of *communio*, his *motu proprio* both builds from prior documents from the Holy See on the liturgical renewal and expresses a pastoral concern toward those who have a continuing attachment to the Tridentine Mass.

The same is true in his apostolic letter to the bishops that accompanies this *motu proprio*. The Holy Father wants to deepen our Church's *communio* by providing hospitality not only to those who embrace the liturgical renewal, but to those whose spirituality may need to be nurtured by the prior 1962 Roman Missal published by Pope John XXIII.

Liturgical *communio* is best established, according to the Holy Father, when we see both the 1962 Roman Missal published by Pope John XXIII and the Missal of Pope Paul VI as two expressions of the same liturgical tradition published during the time of the Second Vatican Council. As our Holy Father so clearly noted in his *motu proprio*:

"The *Roman Missal* promulgated by Paul VI is to be regarded as the ordinary expression of the law of prayer (*lex orandi*) of the Catholic Church of the Latin Rite, while the *Roman Missal* promulgated by St. Pius V and published again by Blessed John XXIII as the extraordinary expression of the law of prayer (*lex orandi*) and on account of its venerable and ancient use let it enjoy due honor."

The Holy Father deliberately names the 1962 Roman Missal published by Pope John XXIII as an "**extraordinary**" expression and the renewed liturgy we currently experience in our parishes as the "**ordinary**" expression. These two expressions are not meant to compete with each other, but rather to complement each other.

As Archbishop, I am grateful for the sense of *communio* we established last year during our extensive consultation and review of the recently promulgated sacramental and liturgical policies here in the Archdiocese of Seattle. I believe this work provides the basis for us to turn our attention and consider ways of working together with this latest *motu proprio* of the Holy Father. I depend on you and your collaborative efforts to make implementation of this *motu proprio* a spiritually enriching experience for our local Church.

In receiving this recent *motu proprio*, I would like to outline for you briefly how we will be working together.

- September 20th and 21st I will be meeting with the Presbyteral Council in an overnight retreat format. We had already selected the theme of “Catholic Identity” as a way of looking at our sacramental celebrations, especially matrimony. Because we selected the topic of “Catholic Identity,” it will be especially timely to discuss with the Presbyteral Council the implementation of this current *motu proprio*. I invite you to speak with your deans prior to their overnight retreat so that they will be able to voice your insights on implementation.
- I am asking you to save the date of November 9th when our fall business meeting of the entire presbyterate will be scheduled. Based on the fruits of our discernment during the September’s Presbyteral Council retreat, I hope to present some helpful guidelines regarding the use of the 1962 Roman Missal for the Archdiocese of Seattle.
- Several months ago, I met with the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter, which already has offered some assistance to our local Church on this matter. I will be working with the Presbyteral Council on how best to respond to their gracious offer of ministry.

While the provisions of this *motu proprio* take effect on September 14th of this year, I want to make sure that all proper procedures are in place so as to avoid confusion among the faithful and unnecessary complexity for our parishes already committed to the “ordinary” celebration of Eucharist. This is in keeping with the explicit instruction of the Holy Father regarding the role of the bishop:

“Nothing is taken away, then, from the authority of the Bishop, whose role remains that of being watchful that all is done in peace and serenity. Should some problem arise which the parish priest cannot resolve, the local Ordinary will always be able to intervene, in full harmony, however, with all that has been laid down by the new norms of the *Motu Proprio*.”

Based on my responsibilities as Archbishop and in the spirit of *communio*, I am requesting you to observe the following points regarding public celebrations of the 1962 Roman Missal published by Pope John XXIII:

- During this time of reflection and planning, I remind you that the current Archdiocesan pastoral and sacramental policies regarding the 1962 Roman Missal remain in place (See EU 41-42).
- As the moderator and guardian of the liturgical life of our local Church, I will be determining the level of liturgical and linguistic competency required by priests who wish to celebrate this extraordinary form publicly. I also will be consulting the Presbyteral Council, the Archdiocesan Liturgy Commission and others with appropriate expertise to determine the process for evaluating competency.

- In answering questions of parishioners, you may wish to note that the 1962 Roman Missal is an **extraordinary** form and, therefore, should never replace a currently scheduled ordinary celebration of the Eucharist in your parish.
- Celebrating three or more Masses on a Sunday requires my permission (See EU 5). This Archdiocesan policy is based on both liturgical norms and canon law (CIC, c. 905 §2). This means that once I have consulted with the Presbyteral Council, I will carefully consider the manner, schedule and location of these extraordinary Masses, especially in light of the Hispanic pastoral plan as well as the many other pressing pastoral needs for the **ordinary** celebration of the Eucharist in our Archdiocese.

I wish to close by emphasizing the words of the Second Vatican Council.

“Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people (1 Pet. 2:9; cf. 2:4-5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism” (CLS Art. 14).

As priest celebrants of the liturgy, we must be imbued by its spirit, formed and educated by its precepts, and in deep love with the Church.

“In the reform and promotion of the sacred liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else. For it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit; and therefore pastors must zealously strive to achieve such participation by means of the necessary instruction. Yet it would be futile to entertain any hopes of realizing this unless in the first place the pastors themselves, become thoroughly imbued with the Spirit and power of the liturgy, and make themselves its teachers” (CSL Art. 14).

I am deeply grateful to all of you for undertaking the challenge of the Second Vatican Council and its continuing expression in the *motu proprio Summorum Pontificum* as we deepen our sense of *communio*.

With warmest personal regards and wishes, I remain

Fraternally yours in Christ,

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Most Rev. Alex J. Brunett
Archbishop of Seattle