

### *The Development of the Liturgical Reform*

the formulae and the rites, and this has very serious consequences. While theological discourse remains at the high level of the educated, through the formulae and rites it begins to be spread among the people. I could illustrate this point with various elements from the *Instructio de cultu eucharistico*, published last year.<sup>1</sup>

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that in the post-Conciliar Commission for the reform of the liturgy, experiments had been conducted and continued over a period of time, and some priests had come to regard them as a right. In his Apostolic Letter, *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, Pope John Paul II echoes this when he speaks openly of “erroneous applications” of the liturgical Constitution of the Council which still persisted.<sup>2</sup>

Given Antonelli’s formation and character, it is easy to intuit that his convictions led him to oppose certain liturgical experiments and some of the directions taken by the liturgical reform which he regarded as dangerous. His evaluations of them display a certain pain and concern:

That which is sad [...] however, is a fundamental datum, a mutual attitude, a pre-established position, namely, many of those who have influenced the reform, [...], and others, have no love, and no veneration of that which has been handed down to us. They begin by despising everything that is actually there. This negative mentality is unjust and pernicious, and unfortunately, Paul VI tends a little to this side. They have all the best intentions, but with this mentality they have only been able to demolish and not to restore.<sup>3</sup>

The following judgment, expressed at the end of 1969, displays lucidity of analysis, sharpness, and objectivity:

My impressions of the liturgical reform are substantially good. The new *Ordo Missae*, which came into force on November 30, 1969, has many positive elements. Like all things, it might have been more perfect. Substantially, however, it is good. The *Institutio generalis Missalis Romani* is more imperfect. The substance is good. With time, it will be possible to counter-balance some of the positions contained in it.<sup>4</sup>

The publication of the *Ordo Missae* had a rather curious history:

The question of the *Ordo Missae* is interesting. The facts are thus: some days ago, Father Stickler, a Salesian, told me that Cardinal Ottaviani had prepared a doctrinal critique of the *Ordo Missae* and of the annexed *Instructio*. This news then appeared in the papers. Msgr. Laboa told me that the Pope had written a two page letter to Cardinal Seper asking him to examine the question. Cardinal Seper spoke of it, with alarm, to Cardinal Gut. Cardinal Gut, who was much taken, then spoke to Father Bugnini.<sup>6</sup>

It was decided to publish the *Instructio* immediately to avoid, perhaps, further criticism and the predictable manipulation by the media.

Yesterday morning, Msgr. Laboa told me more. He said that Cardinal Villot had written to Father Bugnini a few days previously asking him to suspend everything to do with the *Ordo Missae*. Then, I mentioned the unexpected publication of the *Instructio*. Msgr. Laboa told me that yesterday Msgr. Benelli had told Father Bugnini to publish the *Instructio* immediately since it had been ready for some time, and