

Pontifical Commission Ecclesia Dei
INSTRUCTION

For the Carrying Out of the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum*, given *Motu Proprio* by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI

I.

Introduction

1. The Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum* of Pope Benedict XVI given *motu proprio* on 7 July 2007, which came into effect on 14 September 2007, has brought the riches of the Roman Liturgy closer to the Universal Church.

2. With this Letter given *motu proprio*, the Supreme Pontiff Benedict XVI passed a universal law for the Church, to make provision regarding the Roman Liturgy in force in 1962 with rules more suitable for our times.

3. His Holiness, having recalled the assiduous solicitude of the Supreme Pontiffs both in their concern for the Sacred Liturgy and in their recognition of the liturgical books, recalled to mind the ancient principle received from time immemorial and to be maintained for the future, that “*each particular Church must be in accord with the universal Church not only regarding the doctrine of the faith and sacramental signs, but also regarding the usages universally received from apostolic and unbroken tradition. These usages are to be maintained not only so that errors may be avoided, but also for the handing on of the integrity of the faith, because the Church's law of prayer (lex orandi) corresponds to her law of belief (lex credendi).*”^[1]

4. Furthermore, the Apostolic Lord recalls the Roman Pontiffs who served particularly well this concern, especially Saint Gregory the Great and Saint Pius V. The Supreme Pontiff also reflects that, among the liturgical books, the *Missale Romanum* has always been preeminent, and that it has known additions as the centuries rolled by until Blessed Pope John XXIII. Subsequently, when the liturgical restoration was being carried out after the Second Vatican Council, Paul VI in the year 1970 approved a new Missal destined for the use of the Church of the Latin Rite. This was afterwards translated into many languages, and its third edition was promulgated by John Paul II.

5. But quite a number of Christ's faithful, imbued with the spirit of the liturgical rites prior to the Second Vatican Council, expressed a noteworthy desire to keep the ancient tradition. For this reason John Paul II, in a special Indult *Quattuor abhinc annos* conceded in 1984 by the Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship, granted the faculty of using the Roman Missal promulgated by Blessed Pope John XXIII, though under certain conditions. Furthermore, John Paul II himself, in the Apostolic Letter *Ecclesia Dei* issued *motu proprio* in the year 1988, exhorted the Bishops to have great-hearted generosity in granting this faculty, for the good of all Christ's faithful requesting it. And Pope Benedict XVI has acted likewise by promulgating the Apostolic Letter called *Summorum Pontificum* but concerning this, it is timely to consider here as much as possible certain essential principles regarding the Older Use of the Roman Rite.

6. The texts of the Roman Missal promulgated by Paul VI and the texts relevant up until the last edition of John XXIII, exist as two expressions of the Roman Liturgy, which are respectively called *ordinaria* and *extraordinaria* we are, to be sure, dealing with two usages of the one Roman Rite, one set alongside the other. For both forms are the

expression of the single *lex orandi* of the Church. On account of its venerable and ancient use, the *forma extraordinaria* is to be maintained with appropriate honour..

7. The Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum* given *motu proprio* was accompanied by a letter from the Supreme Pontiff himself, signed on the same day(7 July 2007). This letter dealt copiously with the appropriateness and the need for the Apostolic Letter: to be sure, more up-to-date laws were to be passed, there being a lack of rules which would clearly arrange the use of the Roman Liturgy in force in 1962. Furthermore, there was a need for more up-to-date legislation because, once the new Missal was issued, there seemed no reason why rules should be issued concerning the use of the Liturgy of the year 1962. But with the daily ever increasing number of the faithful requesting the celebration of the *forma extraordinaria*, laws had to be passed. The advice of Benedict XVI includes: “*There is no contradiction between the two editions of the Roman Missal. In the history of liturgy growth and progress are found, but not a rupture. What was sacred for our ancestors remains sacred and great for us and it is not permissible that it be suddenly prohibited altogether, nor that it be judged as clearly harmful.*” [2]

8. The Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum* constitutes an important expression of the Magisterium of the Roman Pontiff, and of his *munus* of ruling, and of arranging the Sacred Liturgy, [3] and of his solicitude as Vicar of Christ and Pastor of the Universal Church[4]. The Letter itself has the aim of:

- a. bestowing on all of the faithful the Roman Liturgy in the *Usus Antiquior*, as a precious treasure to be preserved;
- b. genuinely ensuring the use of that Liturgy for those who ask for it, bearing in mind that the actual Use of the Roman Liturgy in force in the year 1962 is a faculty given for the good of the faithful and is, consequently, to be interpreted generously in favour of the faithful for whom it is mainly destined;
- c. promoting reconciliation at the bosom of the Church.

II.

The Responsibilities of the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*

9. The Supreme Pontiff has been pleased to confer on the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei* ordinary vicarious power for all matters within the bounds of its competence, especially in the matter of diligent observance and watchfulness in carrying out the provisions contained in the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum* (cf. art. 12).

10. § 1. Apart from the faculties previously granted by John Paul II and confirmed by Benedict XVI (cf. the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum*, art. 11 and art. 12), the Pontifical Commission exercises power of this sort also in deciding about recourses legitimately sent to it, as hierarchical Superior, against an individual administrative act of any Ordinary which appears contrary to the Apostolic Letter.

§ 2. The decrees which the Pontifical Commission emanates[2] concerning recourses can be challenged *ad normam iuris* before the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura.

11. After having received approval from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, it will be the task of the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei* to take care of the issuing of liturgical books pertaining to the *forma extraordinaria* of the Roman Rite.

III.

Specific Norms

12. This Pontifical Commission, by virtue of the authority granted to it and of the faculties which it enjoys, after making inquiry among the Bishops of the whole world, and desiring to ensure the correct interpretation and faithful execution of the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum*, publishes this Instruction, in accordance with the norm of canon 34 of the *Codex Iuris Canonici*.

On the Competence of Diocesan Bishops

13. It is the task of Diocesan Bishops, according to the *Codex Iuris Canonici*, to be watchful about liturgical matters so that the common good may be preserved and so that all things may happen in their Dioceses^[5] worthily, peacefully and eventemperedly, according to the intent of the Roman Pontiff clearly expressed in the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum*^[6]. If any controversy should arise, or well-founded doubt, about the celebration of the *forma extraordinaria*, judgment is reserved to the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*.

14. On the Diocesan Bishop rests the task of supplying all necessary assistance so that faithful regard should be held towards the *forma extraordinaria* of the Roman Rite, in accordance with the norm of the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum*.

On the *coetus fidelium* (cf. Motu Proprio *Summorum Pontificum*, art. 5 § 1)

15. A group of the faithful (*coetus fidelium*) is said to be existing in a stable manner (*stabiliter existens*) according to the sense of art. 5 § 1 of the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum*, when it is constituted by some persons of an individual parish, even if they have come together after the publication of the Apostolic Letter, by reason of their veneration for the Liturgy in the *Usus Antiquior*, and who ask that it might be celebrated in the parish church or in some oratory or chapel; this group (*coetus*) can be composed of persons coming from several parishes or dioceses, who come together to a parish church or an oratory to achieve the said goal.†

16. If a particular priest, who with some persons incidentally comes across a particular parish church or oratory, should wish to carry out the Sacred action in the *forma extraordinaria*, in view of the norm of articles 2 and 4 of the Apostolic Letter the parish priest or rector of the church or the priest who exercises care of it should admit him to celebrate, while bearing in mind the arrangement of that church's liturgical celebrations.

17. § 1. In order for a decision to be made about individual cases, the parish priest or rector or priest who has care of the church should act prudently, supported by pastoral zeal, charity, and civility.

§ 2. If a group (*coetus*) is made up of just a few faithful, an approach should be made to the Ordinary of the place for him to assign a church to which the faithful can betake themselves for celebrations of this kind, so that active participation can be rendered easier and the celebration of the Holy Mass more worthy.

18. In sanctuaries and places of pilgrimage the possibility of celebrating according to the *extraordinaria forma* is to be provided for groups of pilgrims requesting it (cf. the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum*, art. 5 § 3), if a capable priest is present.

19. Christ's faithful who ask for celebration according to the *forma extraordinaria* must not give assistance to, or join, societies which impugn the validity or the legitimacy of

the Sacrifice of the Holy Mass and of the Sacraments according to the *forma ordinaria*, or which are in any measure hostile to the Roman Pontiff as Pastor of the Universal Church.

***On Sacerdos idoneus* (“Capable Priests”) (cf. Motu Proprio [Summorum Pontificum, art 5 § 4](#))**

20. As far as the things that are necessary for a particular priest to be held idoneus (“capable”) to celebrate in the *forma extraordinaria*, it is laid down that:

a. Any priest who in accordance with the norm of Canon Law^[7] is not impeded, is reckoned capable (*idoneus*) to celebrate the Holy Mass according to the *forma extraordinaria*.

b. As regards the use of the Latin language, it is necessary that a priest who is going to celebrate should be strong in knowledge for rightly uttering the words and understanding their meaning.

c. But as for expertise in carrying out the rite, priests are held to be capable who of their own accord approach to carry out the Sacred action according to the *extraordinaria forma* and had done this previously.

21. Ordinaries are strenuously asked to provide for clergy who are in training a suitable opportunity for acquiring the art of celebrating in the *forma extraordinaria*; and this is most especially applicable for Seminaries, in which it shall be provided that the students of sacred things be aptly instructed, by learning the Latin language^[8] and, where circumstances demand it, the actual *forma extraordinaria* of the Roman Rite.

22. In Dioceses where there are no capable priests it is right for diocesan Bishops to request help from the priests of Institutes erected by the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*, whether for celebrating or for teaching the actual art of celebrating.

23. The faculty to celebrate *sine populo*, or with only one minister taking part, according to the *forma extraordinaria* of the Roman Rite, is granted to any priest, be he secular or religious (cf. the Apostolic Letter [Summorum Pontificum, art. 2](#)). Therefore, for celebrations of this kind, priests, according to the norm of the Apostolic Letter, need no special permission from Ordinaries or superiors.

On Liturgical and Ecclesiastical Discipline

24. The liturgical books of the *forma extraordinaria* are to be used as they stand. All who choose to celebrate according to the *forma extraordinaria* of the Roman Rite are required to know the pertinent rubrics and to follow them correctly in celebrations.

25. In the old Missal more recent saints and some of the new prefaces can be, or rather should be, inserted ^[9], according to what shall be laid down as soon as possible.

26. As for matters established in the Apostolic Letter [Summorum Pontificum, at article 6](#) it is to be stated that the readings of the Holy Mass that are contained in the Missal of the year 1962 can be uttered in Latin only, or in Latin with a vernacular translation following, or in low Masses even in the vernacular alone.

27. As to the disciplinary rules relevant to the celebration of the *forma extraordinaria*, the ecclesiastical discipline of the *Codex Iuris Canonici* promulgated in the year 1983 is to be applied.

28. Furthermore, since it is of course dealt with by special law, in respect of its own subject matter, the Apostolic Letter [Summorum Pontificum](#) derogates from all liturgical

laws that belong to the sacred rites, promulgated from the year 1962 onwards, and not coinciding with the rubrics of the liturgical books of the year 1962.

On Confirmation and on Holy Orders

29. Permission to use the old formula for conferring Confirmation has been confirmed by the Apostolic Letter [Summorum Pontificum \(cf. art. 9 § 2\)](#). Consequently the more recent formula, which is found in the *Ordo Confirmationis* of Pope Paul VI is not necessarily to be used for the *forma extraordinaria*

30. As to the first Tonsure, the Minor Orders and the Subdiaconate, the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum* has not introduced any change in the discipline of the *Codex Iuris Canonici* in the year 1983: for this reason, for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life subject to the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*, a member, having professed by perpetual vows or having definitively been incorporated in a clerical society of apostolic life, is incardinated by the reception of the diaconate as a cleric in the same institute or society, according to the norm of canon 266 § 2 of the *Codex Iuris Canonici*.

31. Only [*or At least*] in Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life subject to the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*, and in these where the use of the liturgical books of the *forma extraordinaria* is maintained, is it allowed to use the *Pontificale Romanum* of the year 1962 for conferring major and minor Orders.

On the Breviarium Romanum

32. To all clerics is granted the faculty of reciting the Roman Breviary of the year 1962, about which [Art. 9 § 3 of the Apostolic Letter Summorum Pontificum](#), and, what is more, entirely and in the Latin language.

On the Sacred Triduum

A group of the faithful (*coetus fidelium*) adhering to the older liturgical tradition enjoys the right, if there is a capable priest present, of celebrating also the Sacred Triduum according to the *forma extraordinaria*. But if there is lacking a church or oratory exclusively assigned for carrying out celebrations of this kind, the parish priest or the Ordinary, in agreement with the capable priest, are to provide opportunities more favourable for attaining the good of souls, with the possibility by no means excluded of repeating the celebrations of the Sacred Triduum in the same church.

On the Rites of Religious Orders

34. It is permitted to members of Religious Orders to use their proper liturgical books in force in the year 1962.

On the Pontificale Romanum and the Rituale Romanum

35. Saving what has been prescribed under n. 31 of this Instruction, it is permitted according to the intention of n. 28 of this same Instruction to use the *Pontificale Romanum*, the *Rituale Romanum*, and the *Caeremoniale Episcoporum* in force in the year 1962.

The Supreme Pontiff Pope Benedict XVI, in the Audience granted to the undersigned Cardinal President of the Pontifical Commission "Ecclesia Dei" on the 8th day of April A.D. 2011, ratified this Instruction and ordered its publication

Given at Rome, from the Premises of the Pontifical Commission Ecclesia Dei, on the 30th day of April A.D. 2011, on the memorial of Saint Pius V.

William Cardinal Levada

President

Mons. Guido Pozzo Secretary

[1] BENEDICTUS XVI, Litterae Apostolicae Summorum Pontificum motu proprio datae, I, AAS 99 (2007) 777; cf. Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani, tertia editio 2002, n. 397.

[2] BENEDICTUS XVI, Epistola ad Episcopos ad producendas Litteras Apostolicas motu proprio datas, de Usu Liturgiae Romanae Instaurationi anni 1970 praecedentis, AAS 99 (2007) 798.

[3] Cf. Code of Canon Law, Canon 838 §1 and §2.

[4] Cf. Code of Canon Law, Canon 331.

[5] Cf. Code of Canon Law, Canons 223 § 2 or 838 §1 and §4.

[6] BENEDICTUS XVI, Epistola ad Episcopos ad producendas Litteras Apostolicas motu proprio datas, de Usu Liturgiae Romanae Instaurationi anni 1970 praecedentis, AAS 99 (2007) 799.

[7] Cf. Code of Canon Law, Canon 900 § 2.

[8] Cf. Code of Canon Law, Canon 249; SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution Sacrosanctum Concilium, 36; Declaration Optatum totius, 13.

[9] BENEDICTUS XVI, Epistola ad Episcopos ad producendas Litteras Apostolicas motu proprio datas, de Usu Liturgiae Romanae Instaurationi anni 1970 praecedentis, AAS 99 (2007) 797.

* The awkward English reflects awkward Latin: 'emanare' is not transitive, any more than the English 'emanate'.

†When the Latin text was first released, there followed another sentence: 'Ad numerum fidelium huius coetus designandum, pastoralis succurrit ratio, cautis tamen circumstantiis aequa lance ponderandis' ('Pastoral logic comes into play for deciding on the number of faithful in this group, yet bearing in mind that the circumstances are to be considered impartially.') The sentence was omitted from subsequent versions released by the Holy See, including the official text published in the *Acta Apostolis Sedis* (AAS Vol CIII N. 6, p416).