

Motu Proprio *Summorum Pontificum* of Pope Benedict XVI

Introductory Remarks

On July 7, 2007, the Vatican released a motu proprio¹ of Pope Benedict XVI entitled *Summorum Pontificum*. The effective date for its implementation is September 14, 2007. The document states that the celebration of the “Tridentine Mass,” that is, the Roman Missal published by Blessed John XXIII in 1962, becomes optional but not mandatory as of that date.

Pope Benedict XVI explains that over the course of the years, “it has been the constant concern of supreme pontiffs to ensure that the Church of Christ offers a worthy ritual to the Divine Majesty, ‘to the praise and glory of His name,’ and ‘to the benefit of all His Holy Church.’”

The Holy Father continues stating that “Since time immemorial it has been necessary – as it is also for the future – to maintain the principle according to which ‘each particular Church must concur with the Universal Church, not only as regards the doctrine of the faith and the sacramental signs, but also as regards the usages universally accepted by uninterrupted apostolic tradition, which must be observed not only to avoid errors but also to transmit the integrity of the faith, because the Church’s law of prayer corresponds to her law of faith.’”²

In this way, the first words of the motu proprio describe Our Holy Father’s intention in issuing this document. He traces the work of Saint Gregory the Great who insured that “the new peoples of Europe received both the Catholic faith and the treasures of worship and culture that had been accumulated by the Romans in the preceding centuries.”³

Pope Benedict XVI points out that of special importance was the work of Saint Pius V who “sustained by great pastoral zeal and following the exhortations of the Council of Trent, renewed the entire liturgy of the Church, oversaw the publication of liturgical books amended and ‘renewed in accordance with the norms of the Fathers,’ and provided them for the use of the Latin Church.

“One of the liturgical books of the Roman rite is the Roman Missal, which developed in the city of Rome and, with the passing of the centuries, little by little took forms very similar to that it has had in recent times.”⁴

¹ A motu proprio is an instruction which means “of his own accord.”

² The first two paragraphs of *Summorum Pontificum* citing the general instruction of the Roman Missal, 3rd ed., 2002, no. 397. *Summorum Pontificum*, par. 7

³ *Summorum Pontificum* par. 3

⁴ *Summorum Pontificum* par. 5

The revised edition of the Roman Missal was reissued by Blessed John XXIII and is the Mass in Latin that is the object of the motu proprio and which “is to be considered as an extraordinary expression of ‘Lex orandi,’ and must be given due honor for its venerable and ancient usage.”⁵

The Ordinary and Extraordinary Forms of the Roman Rite

Hence, the Holy Father writes that “following the insistent prayers of the faithful, long deliberated upon by our predecessor John Paul II, and after having listened to the views of the Cardinal Fathers of the Consistory of 22 March 2006, having reflected deeply upon all aspects of the question, invoked the Holy Spirit and trusting in the help of God” established these changes.⁶

Through the motu proprio, Pope Benedict XVI creates new law which supersedes provisions in earlier documents with regard to the form of Mass in the Roman Rite. He recognizes the Roman Missal promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1970 as the **ordinary** form of the Roman Rite but indicates that the Roman Missal of Blessed John XXIII is the **extraordinary** expression of the same law of prayer of the Mass since it had never been abrogated.⁷

Other Provisions of *Summorum Pontificum*

All priests may celebrate the ordinary form of the Roman Rite (promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1970) or the extraordinary form of the Roman Rite (the Roman Missal promulgated by Blessed John XXIII in 1962) without people present, without seeking permission from Rome or his bishop. The Holy Father goes on to state that the celebration of the Roman Missal of Blessed John XXIII on a regular basis in oratories with the authorization of Major Superiors and attended by people who wish to be present is also a possibility. Our understanding of Article 2 in our particular situation is that this celebration of the Roman Missal of Blessed John XXIII without people present would not be a regularly scheduled liturgy.

Furthermore, the motu proprio provides for the celebration of the Roman Missal of Blessed John XXIII when approved by pastors in parishes where a stable group of faithful request it, under the guidance of the bishop, with provisions for the celebration of the Roman Missal of Blessed John XXIII only by priests qualified to do so through their knowledge of Latin and rubrics.

⁵ *Summorum Pontificum* Article 1

⁶ *Summorum Pontificum* par. 9

⁷ *Summorum Pontificum* as positive law, replaces the faculties and indults granted by *Quattuor Abhinc Annos* (1984) and *Ecclesia Dei* (1988)

Of special interest to celebrations of the Roman Missal of Blessed John XXIII on the campus of the University of Notre Dame is Article 5, Number 5, which states “In churches that are not parish or conventual churches, it is the duty of the Rector of the church to grant the above permission.” In our specific situation at Notre Dame, this reference would be to the rector of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, who would receive petitions from “a stable group of faithful who adhere to the earlier liturgical tradition”⁸

Pastoral Practices for the University of Notre Dame Derived from the *Motu Proprio*

According to the new rules, therefore, Pope Benedict XVI states that the current form of the Mass, as it has been celebrated on our campus and throughout the world for nearly four decades now, that is, since the reform of Pope Paul VI in 1970, is the ordinary form of the Roman Rite, that is, the way in which the Mass will continue to be celebrated with a few possible exceptions. The extraordinary form will be celebrated from time to time and under special circumstances.

The University of Notre Dame as such is not a parish, although there is a territorial parish which includes the university campus among other geographical areas. Sacred Heart Parish celebrates its liturgies in the Crypt of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart.

The Office of Campus Ministry and the Rector of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, as well as the rectors of the residence halls, will continue to schedule regular Masses in the ordinary form for those persons for whom they have responsibility. This will include Masses celebrated in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart as well as Masses celebrated in the residence halls.

After September 14, 2007, and as soon as it is possible to fulfill the requirements of Article 5, Number 4, which addresses the need for celebrants of the extraordinary form of the Roman Rite to be familiar with the Latin language and the rubrics of the Roman Missal of Blessed John XXIII, a recited Mass in the extraordinary form will be celebrated on Sunday mornings at 8:00 a.m. in the chapel of Alumni Hall. Celebrants for these liturgies will be appointed by the Director of Campus Ministry or the Rector of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart who each hold jurisdiction with regard to the celebration of some of the sacraments on campus. Beginning in the second semester, celebrations of the extraordinary form of the Mass may occur on one or two occasions each semester with the participation of Basilica choirs.

⁸ *Summorum Pontificum* Article 5, Number 1

The Celebration of Marriages and Baptisms on Campus

According to the law of the Church, pastors are the only ones permitted to approve of baptisms or marriages for members of their parishes in the parish church. Their permission is required for these sacraments to be administered outside the parish. The celebration of baptisms and marriages in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart and in the Log Chapel, the only two places approved for these celebrations by our local bishop, are therefore a privilege and not a right. Those who seek this privilege will be advised that the sacraments of baptism and marriage on the campus in the locations indicated above will be celebrated according to the 1970 Missal. The same is true with regard to “Notre Dame funerals.”

Final Considerations

Any priest in good standing on campus is to first contact and seek permission from the Director of Campus Ministry or the Rector of the Sacred Heart if he wishes to celebrate the extraordinary form.

Public Celebrations of the Liturgy of the Hours in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart will be according to the revised breviary.

While liturgies celebrated in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart and other public liturgies will continue to welcome members of the campus community as well as others, celebrations in the residence halls, whether in the ordinary or extraordinary form, will normally be available only to residents on the campus of the University of Notre Dame and those who are associated with the University as members of the faculty, staff and student body.

In a letter which the Holy Father sent to the bishops on the occasion of the publication of the motu proprio, he states, “In the second place, the fear was expressed in discussions about the awaited motu proprio, that the possibility of a wider use of the 1962 Missal would lead to disarray or even divisions within parish communities. This fear also strikes me as quite unfounded. *The use of the old Missal presupposes a certain degree of liturgical formation and some knowledge of the Latin language; neither of these is found very often.* (emphasis added) Already from these concrete presuppositions, it is clearly seen that the new Missal will certainly remain the ordinary form of the Roman Rite, not only on account of the juridical norms, but also because of the actual situation of the communities of the faithful.”⁹

It seems to us that this is the situation on our campus as well as in the great majority of places where the Holy Eucharist is celebrated around the world.

⁹ Letter from the Holy Father to the Bishops on *Summorum Pontificum* dated July 7, 2007, par. 9

During the first semester, Campus Ministry will provide a catechesis on the Eucharist which will be prepared in such a way as to further deepen the knowledge and appreciation of the Eucharist on the part of our students, further explore the ordinary and extraordinary forms of the celebration of the Roman Rite, and promote faithful adherence to the new law of the Church promulgated by Our Holy Father while promoting at the same time unity among the worshipping community which has always been the case at Notre Dame.

/signed/

Rev. Mark L. Poorman, C.S.C.
Vice President for Student Affairs

/signed/

Rev. Richard V. Warner, C.S.C.
Director, Campus Ministry

August 22, 2007

Feast of the Queenship of Mary