

Tradition, the Pope, and Liturgical Reform: A Problematization of Tradition in the Catholic Church and Catholic–Orthodox Rapprochement

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Introduction

At the very center of the discord between Byzantine and Latin Christianity over the centuries have been meta-theological (including meta-dogmatic) divergences. Even if the content of the disputes and mutual accusations were and are specific articles of faith (i.e., *ex patre procedit* vs. *ex patre filioque procedit*, dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary vs. no consensus on this matter among the Church Fathers, etc.) or liturgical and disciplinary issues (leavened vs. unleavened bread, celibacy of clergy, etc.), the real problem is that the two parts of the Christian world adopt different sets of criteria as to what is to be the main and binding reference point to settle these matters.¹ This can be seen most clearly in connection with the dispute over the primacy of the bishop of Rome, which lies at the intersection of theology and meta-theology and confronts dogmatic and meta-dogmatic theses, those concerning prerogatives for resolving dogmatic issues.

The problem that I would like to raise in this essay is of a meta-theological nature and is related closely to the fundamental differences between Orthodoxy and Catholicism. The basis of these differences lies in the problem

¹ See A. Edward Sicienski, *The Papacy and the Orthodox: Sources and History of a Debate* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), ix–x. I would like to give many thanks to Dr. Laurence P. Hemming and Dr. Peter Kwasniewski for careful reading of the manuscript and numerous valuable comments, and to Dr. Ronald Ti for his help in bringing the text to the correct linguistic form. The responsibility for the theses contained in the article rests entirely with me.

of tradition, the understanding of it, and its relation to the ecclesiastical authority. In a fundamental sense, the entire East–West dispute, including its meta-theological dimension, can be reduced to questions over tradition. Both the Orthodox and Western divisions of Christianity consider themselves orthodox followers of the apostolic tradition. The official and stated position of both is that the concept of tradition is a key element in their collective identity. However, they understand it differently and relate it to themselves in different ways. It would not be overstating things to say that any fruitful and lasting movement toward any reconciliation and ultimate communion has the essential pre-requisite of finding and developing a common understanding and practice of tradition. It is not the purpose of this paper to provide a definitive analysis and solution to this issue but rather to highlight a factor which, in my opinion, is infrequently discussed: that is, the problematic nature of the place and the importance of tradition in contemporary Catholicism. It is my premise that some aspects of the notion of papal authority, as they were developed within Catholic ecclesiology, have resulted historically in unintended and adverse consequences regarding the meaning of tradition and its relationship to Church authority. To put it differently, this paper will attempt to analyze and describe the current treatment by the Catholic Church (both the hierarchy and the faithful) of tradition, not as a basic premise for Christian faith and life, but as an open area of doubts, discussions, reinterpretations, and criticism, and to analyze and describe some contemporary conditions and circumstances that led to it. In my opinion, the latter are closely connected with the processes that the Catholic liturgy underwent primarily in the twentieth century.²

² The problem of interconnections between Church authority, liturgy, and tradition in the context of liturgical reforms has already been a subject of critical considerations on the part of some Catholic authors. See especially Klaus Gamber, *The Reform of the Roman Liturgy: Its Problems and Background*, trans. Klaus D. Grimm (San Juan Capistrano, CA: Una Voce; Harrison, NY: Foundation for Catholic Reform, 1993), 27–39; Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Milestones: Memoirs 1927–1977*, trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998), 148; Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, trans. John Saward (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), 165–70.; Geoffrey Hull, *The Banished Heart: Origins of Heteropraxy in the Catholic Church* (London: T & T Clark, 2010); Alcuin Reid, *The Organic Development of the Liturgy: The Principles of Liturgical Reform and Their Relation to the Twentieth-Century Liturgical Movement Prior to the Second Vatican Council* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 306–7; Laurence P. Hemming, *Worship as a Revelation: The Past, Present and Future of Catholic Liturgy* (London: Burns & Oates, 2008), 27–28; Peter Kwasniewski, “Hyperpapalism and Liturgical Mutation: The Case Against the *Novus Ordo*,” presented

Entering the area of problems related to the papal authority, tradition, liturgy, and its reform means touching on delicate issues that have been the subject of heated disputes and controversies over the last few decades. Naturally, then, the interpretation of the reform itself, the involvement of papal authority in it, and the conclusions regarding the consequences of these facts on the level of understanding and meaning of the tradition in the Church, which is offered below, will be treated—rightly so—as a voice in these disputes. I would therefore like to make it clear that the following considerations should not be understood as aimed at undermining any truth of the Catholic faith, the teaching of both of the Vatican Councils, the teaching of the pre- and post-conciliar popes, or the validity of the reformed liturgy. The problems and relationships that I am trying to describe are related to certain interpretations of the papacy, liturgy, and tradition that have gained a place, and sometimes even domination, in the Church and influenced specific decisions and practical actions. If I question something, it is precisely this domination and—apparent—obviousness of these interpretations. In this sense, my considerations are in line with reflections set out by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, who pointed out that the pope's authority does not mean that he is superior to the tradition,³ and that the post-conciliar liturgical reform was only one of the possible applications of the *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, not necessarily that which implemented the provisions of the conciliar document in the most proper way.⁴

The essential premise for my considerations is the close relationship between the liturgy as a specific, historical ritual system functioning in the life of the Church and Catholic tradition in its objective sense (truths of the faith and their transfer) as well as its subjective sense (understanding of tradition, living according to it). The father of the Catholic liturgical movement, Dom Prosper Guéranger, described liturgy as “Tradition itself at its highest degree of power and solemnity.”⁵ Basing himself on, among others, Guéranger's approach, Yves Congar developed an understanding of the liturgy as a “monument of tradition,” in which the above-mentioned relationship is described in detail. As Johan te Velde shows, for Congar

at the Lepanto Conference, February 16, 2019, St. Vincent Ferrer Church, Manhattan, NY, rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2019/07/hyperpapalism-and-liturgical-mutation.html.

³ Ratzinger, *Spirit of the Liturgy*, 165–66.

⁴ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, “Retrouver l'esprit de la liturgie: Entretien avec le Cardinal Ratzinger,” *L'homme nouveau*, October 7, 2001, 9–11.

⁵ Prosper Guéranger, *Institutions liturgiques*, vol. 1 (Paris: Société Générale de Librairie Catholique, 1878), 3.

liturgy is a special and primary monument among “the monuments of tradition”⁶ due to the eight dimensions of their relationship he distinguished. (1) Because “tradition in its dogmatic foundation is an interpretation of Scripture continuing that of Christ and the apostles, the liturgy is truly the holy ark containing sacred tradition at its most intense.”⁷ (2) In relation to the Scripture, the liturgy on the one hand “augments” it, and on the other offers its unique explanation: “The ultimate meaning of Scripture—God’s revelation in Christ, which is the aim of exegesis—is expressed most vividly in liturgy.”⁸ (3) By constantly renewing themselves through celebrations in a family of the faithful, liturgical practices and texts become home to a living tradition. (4) The liturgy presents its content as a lived and celebrated reality, not a theoretical instruction—tradition as passing on the mysteries of faith precedes all theological theorizing and is not limited to the transmission of texts and words. (5) Liturgy always represents the integral reality of salvation—faith is contained in the liturgy in its totality.⁹ (6) Liturgical language is like the language of the Scripture, rich in images and depth; it is not so much propositional or doctrinal as symbolically suggestive—its nature reflects what it carries. (7) Liturgy as a ritual has a preserving effect, and it concerns not only what is explicit or known but also what is ineffable and unfathomable, the very “mystery of faith.” (8) The liturgy is an instruction, but not in a didactic way; liturgy is not a space of argumentation or intellectual didactics, but of a living practice through which people can enter into an intimate relationship with the truths of faith.¹⁰

Although Congar’s approach to liturgy and tradition cannot be described as “conservative,” especially in the sense in which their relationship was understood by some of the pre-Vatican II Church

⁶ Congar distinguishes seven “testimonies of tradition”: “Holy Scripture, the oral tradition of the apostles, the magisterium’s texts, liturgy, the fathers and preachers of the church, the rules and practices of ecclesiastic life, the doctrines of theologians and human reason generally.” He divides them into “constitutive” (Scripture and apostolic tradition) and “explanatory” (the rest of them). The latter are the proper “monuments of tradition.” See Johan te Velde, “Congar on Liturgy as a Monument of Tradition,” *Questions liturgiques* 95, no. 3–4 (2014): 194–215, at 198.

⁷ Yves Congar, *La Tradition et la vie de l’Église* (Paris: Fayard, 1963; repr. 1984), 106 (cited by Te Velde, “Congar on Liturgy,” 200).

⁸ Te Velde, “Congar on Liturgy,” 202.

⁹ See also Elizabeth Teresa Groppe, *Yves Congar’s Theology of the Holy Spirit* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 30.

¹⁰ See Te Velde, “Congar on Liturgy,” 204.

hierarchy,¹¹ and although the “traditionality” of the liturgy does not mean for him its absolute immutability, it nevertheless presupposes far-reaching stability in liturgical forms: the transmission of tradition *through* and *in* the liturgy requires *continuity in the transmission of the liturgy itself* in its specific shapes. Each age has its own fashions and tendencies, which, if the liturgical life of the Church were completely subjected to them, could lead to the loss of the universal character of tradition.¹² The stability of the ritual, its material continuity, protects this character from decay and oblivion because it acts as “a powerful means of communion in the same reality between men separated by centuries of change and affected by very different influences,” containing and providing “elements which are much more numerous than were realized by those men who performed and preserved the rites, and actually handed them on to us: much more, even, than we ourselves can know.”¹³ If so, this would mean that the actual content of the liturgy is inseparable from its form and at the same time impossible to comprehensively rationally grasp at any particular historical moment.¹⁴ In this sense, the liturgy—as a specific ritual system, not the idea or concept

¹¹ See Paul Philibert, “Congar’s Ecclesiastical Subtext: Intransigent Conservatism,” in Yves Congar, *My Journal of the Council*, trans. Mary John Ronayne and Mary Cecily Boulding, ed. Denis Minns (Hindmarsh, South Africa: ATF Theology, 2012), 48–57, at 49.

¹² Yves Congar, “Autorité, Initiative, Coresponsabilité,” *La maison-Dieu* 97 (1969), 34–57, at 55, as cited by Innocent Smith, “Vagaggini and Congar on the Liturgy and Theology,” *Questions liturgiques* 96, no. 3–4 (2015): 191–221, at 206n72: “The conservative character of the liturgy makes it possible for it to preserve and transmit intact the values whose importance one epoch may have forgotten, but which the next epoch is happy to find intact and preserved, so that it can live from them again. Where would we be if this liturgical conservatism had not resisted the late medieval taste for sensory devotions, the eighteenth century’s individualistic, rational, and moralizing imperatives, the nineteenth century’s critique, or the modern period’s subjective philosophies? Thanks to the liturgy everything has been retained and transmitted. Ah! Let us not expose ourselves to the reproach sixty years hence that we squandered and lost the sacred heritage of the Catholic communion as it is deployed in the slow flow of time. Let us keep a healthy awareness that we carry in ourselves only a moment, the tip of the iceberg in relation to a reality which is beyond us in every way.”

¹³ Yves Congar, *Tradition and Traditions: An Historical and a Theological Essay*, trans. Michael Naseby and Thomas Rainborough (London: Burns & Oates, 1966; New York: Macmillan, 1967), as cited by Smith, “Vagaggini and Congar,” 211n98.

¹⁴ This intuition of Congar’s corresponds closely to Hemming’s proposal in *Worship as a Revelation* that liturgy be understood in its various traditional rites and forms in terms of revelation—the knowledge of God which he himself gives to people in time.

of the liturgy—must always be something predominantly transmitted and received, not created *de novo* on the basis of a certain understanding of its content, which would then lead to the construction of words, signs, and gestures that seem fitting to the artisans. As Ratzinger puts it:

The “rite,” that form of celebration and prayer which has ripened in the faith and the life of the Church, is a condensed form of living tradition. . . . And thus at the same time the fellowship of generations one with another becomes something we can experience, fellowship with the people who pray before us and after us. Thus the rite is something of benefit which is given to the Church, a living form of *paradosis*, the handing-on of tradition.¹⁵

Following these intuitions and descriptions, I propose treating the liturgy *in its specific ritual character* as a synecdoche of tradition. Performing inherited, visible and, tangible liturgical forms, “more or less invariant sequences of formal acts and utterances not entirely encoded by the performers,”¹⁶ perceived and understood as solid and repetitive *in time*, both is intrinsically tradition and reflects it as a whole. Liturgy allows the faithful to experience durability and the truth of tradition in the face of a changing world¹⁷ and creates an objective framework for the collective and personal interpretation of the Christian “universe of meanings.” Thus, the liturgy is that part of the tradition that signifies the very tradition itself. What happens with the liturgy directly influences the way tradition as such is understood, not only in theologians’ considerations, but at the level of consciousness of participants and members of the Church.

I speculate that most Orthodox would agree with Guéranger’s, Congar’s, and Ratzinger’s descriptions of the relationship between liturgy and tradition and with the general rule derived therefrom.¹⁸ At the same

¹⁵ Joseph Ratzinger, preface to Reid, *Organic Development*, 9–13, at 11. Cf. Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 166–67.

¹⁶ See Roy A. Rappaport’s definition of ritual in his *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 24.

¹⁷ See John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology. Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1987), 115.

¹⁸ In this context, very instructive is Orthodox scholar Andrew Louth’s review of Thomas Pott’s attempt to prove that the Byzantine tradition knows cases of “inorganic” (deliberate, planned, etc.) changes in the liturgy, and that therefore the difference between the Western and Eastern approaches is actually smaller than is usually thought: “But it is not clear to me how far all this really qualifies the contrast between liturgical change in East and West. Even with Nikon’s reforms it was a matter of the modification of an existing liturgy, rather than the

time, I presume that in the Catholic world, opinions on this subject would be far from unanimous, and this approach would be rapidly opposed by a range of mutually incompatible concepts and interpretations of tradition, liturgy, and their status and relationship. I would go so far as to propose that for many (if not most) Catholics, both the concept and practice of tradition are now something distant, a category that has ceased to play an important role in self-identification. However, where it appears as a part of various Church discourses, it is problematic in many ways, and instead of being a bonding element, it becomes the subject of disputes and divisions. In my opinion, this is because of the liturgical change and the role played in it by Church authorities, especially the popes themselves. According to my understanding of the Orthodox approach to tradition, liturgy, and ecclesiastical authority,¹⁹ it seems to me that the greatly diminished

devising of a fresh one: there was more continuity than change. The idea of liturgy as part of tradition, as the place where we experience tradition most deeply, . . . is a fundamental perception, not peculiarly Orthodox. The truth of the Divine Liturgy—the presence of Christ, our uniting ourselves with his self-offering to the Father—is valid whatever form of words is used to express it, but that sameness is humanly grasped through particular identities. . . . The Western Church dissolved much of those particulars, but it is that perception which the Orthodox still hold to be important”; see Review of Thomas Pott, *La réforme liturgique byzantine. Étude du phénomène l’évolution non-spontanée de la liturgie byzantine* (Rome: CLV Edizioni Liturgiche, 2000), *The Journal of Theological Studies* 53, no. 1 (2002): 358–61, at 360–61. See also Lasha Tchantouridze’s review of Pott’s *Byzantine Liturgical Reform* in *The Canadian Journal of Orthodox Christianity* 7, no. 1 (2012): 74–80.

¹⁹ I follow such authors as: Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*; Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (Baltimore, MD: Penguin, 1964), 203–13; Paul Evdokimov, *Orthodoxy* (Hyde Park, NY: New City, 2011), 136–42; Robert Taft, “The Spirit of Eastern Christian Worship,” in *Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding* (Rome: Edizioni Orientalia Christiana, 1997), 143–60. In his later articles Taft deeply revises or even rejects some of his own theses from this text (above all, those talking about the existence of a “golden age” of the Christian liturgy, which would be continued by Orthodox worship)—see Taft, “Eastern Presuppositions and Western Liturgical Renewal,” *Antiphon* 5, no. 1 (2000): 10–22; Taft, “Between Progress and Nostalgia: Liturgical Reform and the Western Romance with the Christian East, Strategies and Realities,” in *A Living Tradition: On the Intersection of Liturgical History and Pastoral Practice*, ed. David A. Pitt, Stefanos Alexopoulos, and Christian McConnell (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2012), 19–39 (in the latter, Taft is even repentant about the dissemination of the idealized image, which he now describes as a romantic myth—see 33n36). I agree with Taft on this last point. At the same time, in my opinion, it does not invalidate his description of the “spirit of Eastern Christian worship,” especially since it is based on the views of Orthodox Christians

understanding of these realities in the contemporary Catholic Church, as well as the practices based on it, is a very important obstacle to our respective congregations' mutual understanding and communion. This obstacle is frequently overlooked.

The present essay will consist of five parts: (1) a short presentation of twentieth-century changes in Catholic liturgy (especially after Vatican II) against the background of the history of the Roman rite since the reforms after the Council of Trent; (2) an attempt to articulate the theory of tradition which underpinned these changes; (3) considerations about the role of papal authority over the liturgy (in the context of its general conceptual development since the reform of Pius V) in processes of reforming it; (4) reflections on the consequences of these liturgical reforms in terms of the Catholic understanding(s) of tradition; and (5) conclusions considering one possible meaning of these consequences for a prospective Orthodox–Catholic rapprochement.

The Roman Rite—A Short Recent History

The history of the Roman rite during the past 450 years can be divided into two periods. The first period, from 1568/1570 to 1911—that is, from the promulgation by Pius V of the codified liturgical books (breviary and missal) to the Pius X's reform of the Roman breviary—is a period characterized by widespread invariance of official forms of worship, guaranteed by typical texts, introduced as binding in the Catholic world particularly when it was deemed that a given local or religious rite did not possess at least a documented 200-year tradition. This obligation was meant to

themselves. The main feature of this spirit is “An attachment to tradition, to the ways handed down from time immemorial by their fathers in the faith,” which “is evident in every aspect of church life in the East, but above all in worship” (Taft, “Spirit,” 148). As a side note, it is worth noting that in both of these “revisionist” texts, Taft seems to be torn between opposing tendencies: understanding the “traditionality” of liturgy in terms of deep stability of forms of worship, and fierce opposition to contemporary traditionalism. This leads him to clear inconsistencies. In “Between Progress and Nostalgia,” he sharply hits the idealizations of Tridentine (and/or Eastern) liturgy, at the same time arguing: “For Christians the only ‘ideal period of liturgy’ is the one Divine Providence has them living in” (38). Thus he actually undermines the legitimacy of liturgical reform, which he defends in an aggressive way. Of course, this is not what he meant; the statement was intended to be an argument for recognizing the current—reformed—liturgical forms as “given by Divine Providence.” Yet if he is right, reform, as a radical liturgical change, would profoundly contradict this principle. It is difficult to imagine such a change as not based on the assumption that the previous version, i.e. the one Christians had lived in up to the time of the reform, was far from the ideal.

exclude the use of liturgical practices that could have been influenced by proto-Protestant (already present in the second half of the fourteenth century) and Protestant ideas.²⁰ At the same time, it allowed the preservation of rites as divergent in character as the Ambrosian (Milanese) and Mozarabic, as well as many of the different existing Latin rites (diocesan and religious), such as the Sarum, Carthusian, Dominican, Carmelite, and so on.²¹ As Pius V's bulls *Quod a Nobis* and *Quo Primum* declare, these communities could replace their rites with a codified Roman liturgy only "if they like it much more and as long as the bishop and the entire chapter are in agreement."²² Even considering the apodictic nature of formulas ordering its adoption wherever the liturgical rite was not in such a long use, it is difficult to agree with Martin Klöckener, according to whom, "from

²⁰ See Denis Crouan, *The History and the Future of the Roman Liturgy*, trans. Michael Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), chapter 8. It seems that this regulation contained in Pius V's bulls *Quod a Nobis* and *Quo Primum* can be read as an extension and refinement of the regulation adopted by the Council of Trent in *Decree Concerning the Things to Be Observed, and to Be Avoided, in the Celebration of the Mass* §7, according to which priests were obliged to use only such ceremonies and prayers "which have been approved of by the Church and have been received by a frequent and praiseworthy usage" (*Dogmatic Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, Vatican Council I, Plus the Decree on the Immaculate Conception and the Syllabus of Errors* [Rockford, IL: TAN, 1977], 148). In context, the conciliar decree aims at preventing superstitious approaches to the Mass rituals, which had influenced the way of performing the worship toward an arbitrary manipulation of its forms. Limiting oneself to the liturgical forms inherited and purified by long use would be a safeguard against this kind of distortion, but the same principle also holds for avoiding the problem of the manipulation of liturgical forms by the heterodox.

²¹ See e.g.: Frank Senn, *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1997), 489; Keith Pecklers, *The Genius of the Roman Rite: The Reception and Implementation of the New Missal* (London: Burnes & Oates, 2009), 20; Hull, *Banished Heart*, 157.

²² See Pius V, *Quod a Nobis*, in *Breviarium Romanum ex decreto sacrosancti Concilii Tridentinum restitutum* (Paris: Johannes & Franciscus Henault, 1675) (trans. and emphasis mine). See also Pius V, *Quo Primum*: "This new rite alone is to be used unless approval of the practice of saying Mass differently was given at the very time of the institution and confirmation of the church by Apostolic See at least 200 years ago, or unless there has prevailed a custom of a similar kind which has been continuously followed for a period of not less than 200 years, in which most cases We in no wise rescind their above-mentioned prerogative or custom. However, if this Missal, which we have seen fit to publish, be more agreeable to these latter, We grant them permission to celebrate Mass according to its rite, provided they have the consent of their bishop or prelate or of their whole Chapter" (trans. papalencyclicals.net/pius05/p5quopri.htm; emphasis mine).

then on, the lawful liturgical tradition was seen only to exist in the Roman and curial tradition.²³ Not counting the case of Pope Urban VIII's controversial revision of the breviary hymns (1631),²⁴ until 1911 the basis of the Roman liturgy as a whole remained essentially unchanged. Many new feasts and memorials of saints were added to it, and some corrections were made at the level of the liturgical rubrics, but these changes constituted gradual and natural developments, without interference in the structure or genius of the rites themselves.

This situation replaced the pluralism that characterized earlier liturgical customs, which toward the end of the Middle Ages were vulnerable to variation and potential abuse. This liturgical chaos created opportunities to manipulate the content of the liturgy and was taken advantage of by Protestant reformers to propagate their own ideas. Also influential was the relatively fresh invention of printing, which gave great opportunities to disseminate "new" liturgical books and which contributed to a differentiation of rituals largely beyond any Church control.²⁵ Pope Pius V, conforming to the dictates of the Council of Trent (25th session, December 4, 1563), ordered the codification of the papal liturgical books which were (in essence) very similar to their precedents certified in the fifteenth century (*Ordo Missalis secundum consuetudinem Romanae Curiae* printed in Milan in 1474) and the thirteenth century (the so-called *Missale Regulae*, a papal missal adopted and spread by Franciscans)²⁶—the results of the development of the papal version of the Roman rite as part of a living tradition. The changes introduced to the existing liturgical books consisted in, among others, reconciliation of the missal with the breviary, reduction of the (significant) number of prefaces and sequences, reduction of the number of feasts and votives in order to emphasize the temporal

²³ Martin Klöckener, "Concepts of History and Tradition in Modern Liturgical Books," in *Ritual Dynamics in Jewish and Christian Contexts: Between Bible and Liturgy*, ed. Claudia D. Bergmann and Benedikt Kranemann (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 85–103, at 91.

²⁴ On this issue see Reid, *Organic Development*, 47–48.

²⁵ See Martin Klöckener, "Liturgical Renewal through History," *Studia liturgica* 44 (2014): 13–33, at 27.

²⁶ See: Maciej Zachara, *Krótką historia Mszału Rzymskiego* (Warszawa: Promic, 2014), 100; Anthony J. Chadwick, "The Roman Missal of the Council of Trent," in *T & T Clark Companion to Liturgy*, ed. Alcuin Reid (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 107–32, at 109. The fact of the close resemblance between the missal of Pius V and his predecessors is strongly emphasized in the version of the introduction to the missal of Paul VI, corrected in 1970—see *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, §7, uscbb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/general-instruction-of-the-roman-missal/index.cfm.

cycle, and so on.²⁷ They can be compared to the pruning of shoots,²⁸ although of course the question would be whether this codification and the manner in which it was carried out did not constitute over-pruning. In its most fundamental sense, the post-Trent reform consisted of choosing a specific—papal—traditional liturgical custom, rendering it in a codified form and then obliging the entire Latin Church to accept it at the expense of many local liturgical traditions, if those traditions did not have a sufficiently long history.

The second period began in 1911, finding its apogee in the period after Vatican II and continues to this day. Its main feature is a series of escalating and accelerating changes: from Pius X and his reforms to the breviary and calendar (1911), to Pius XII's reform of the Holy Week rites (1952–1955), to reforms during the pontificate of Paul VI (1964–1975), resulting in the exchange of all books of the Roman rite and the establishment of the *Novus Ordo Missae*. Pope Paul VI himself, in the apostolic constitution *Missale Romanum*, when promulgating the new missal, uses the following phrase to describe the structural transformations of both the core and detailed elements of the contents of the liturgical books: they “have been changed, ... reviewed and considerably modified” (“mutatae . . . recognitae et valde variatae sunt”).²⁹ So, beyond a *Novus Ordo Missae*, we can legitimately speak of a *novus ordo liturgiae* or, speaking in Klaus Gamber's words, the “Modern Rite” instead of the “Roman Rite.”³⁰ The most recent

²⁷ They are discussed in Chadwick, “Roman Missal,” 115–17.

²⁸ The metaphor of “pruning” in this context is used by both Senn, *Christian Liturgy*, 489, and Reid, *Organic Development*, 41.

²⁹ Both the English and the Latin of *Missale Romanum* come from the Vatican site.

³⁰ See Gamber, *Reform of the Roman Liturgy*, 24. This terminology of Gamber's was criticized by the Jesuit John Baldovin in *Reforming the Liturgy: A Response to the Critics* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2008), especially 36–51. However, Baldovin, while pointing out various problems related to Gamber's approach, does not deconstruct the basic thought behind this distinction, which is simply a conclusion from direct observation: the post-conciliar rite is so different from the pre-Vatican II one that if we called the latter “Roman” we must call the former otherwise. Fr. Joseph Gelineau, another Jesuit, one of the consultants of the council that implemented the reform process (the so-called Consilium ad exsequendam Constitutionem de Sacra Liturgia, or Council for the Execution of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy), made (with brutal directness) the same conclusion on which Gamber's distinction is based: “In fact it is a different liturgy of the Mass. We must say it plainly: the Roman rite as we knew it exists no longer” (*The Liturgy Today and Tomorrow*, trans. Dinah Livingstone [London: Darton, Longman & Todd / Paulist, 1978], 11). Gamber's approach could also be criticized from the perspective of historical relativism, undermining the very existence of such a thing as the “Roman Rite”—see Nathan Mitchell, “The

significant act of the post-conciliar reform has been the third typical edition of the missal of Paul VI (2002).

Behind all these changes there were some ideas or motivations that were clearly positive, developmental and resulting from real needs but not implying a deconstruction of the existing rite by itself. At the same time, however, their *modus operandi* more and more resembled the manipulation of the forms of worship, up to and including the rejection of their traditional shape in favor of elements (or even entire structures) taken from alien liturgical traditions or created entirely *de novo*. For example, Pope Pius X's reform of the breviary was aimed at restoring the Roman ancient custom of reciting the entire Psalter during the week, leveling out the displacement by other feasts of the formularies of Sunday and days of liturgical periods (especially Lent), and relieving the burden on priests who found it difficult to fulfill all the obligations imposed on them. However, this was done by deep changes in liturgical calendar³¹ and disorganization of the Psalter—precisely the assignment of Psalms to particular days and canonical hours—contained in Pius V's *Breviarium Romanum* (1568), in which “the psalmody barely differs from the oldest known evidences of the Roman office in the fifth and sixth centuries,”³² and creating a system unknown in the history of the Roman rite. Alcuin Reid writes: “It was a singular moment in liturgical history. That a pope could discard ancient liturgical Tradition by sole virtue of his own authority is found nowhere in liturgical history before Saint Pius X.”³³

Amen Corner: Back to the Future?,” *Worship* 73 (1999): 60–69, at 63. If “there is no ‘Roman Rite’ and never has been,” to say that this rite has been replaced by another is simply absurd. The problem with this kind of approach is that it is paradoxically ahistorical, that is, it does not take into account that even if it is difficult to indicate the “substantial unity of the Roman Rite” in the early stages of its development, one can speak of its consolidation in the late Middle Ages, while the post-Vatican II reform, using Baldovin’s formulation, “followed centuries of relative liturgical fixity” (*Reforming the Liturgy*, 54). Therefore, even if one agrees with the deconstruction of “a myth of eternal liturgy” related to the Roman rite, it would be impossible to talk about the non-existence of such a rite and its long history of relative unity at the time of reform. For a thorough treatment of its unity and continuity, see Michael Fiedrowicz, *The Traditional Mass: History, Form, and Theology of the Classical Roman Rite*, trans. Rose Pfeifer (Brooklyn, NY: Angelico, 2020).

³¹ See, e.g., Hemming, *Worship as a Revelation*, 125–27.

³² See Paweł Milcarek, “Od psalterza pełnego do psalterza łatwiejszego: Z dziejów reformy Breviarza rzymskiego w XX wieku,” *Christianitas* 47 (2012): 193–234, at 194.

³³ Reid, *Organic Development*, 77–78.

Another case was the post-conciliar lectionary. The Vatican II Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, recommended a more lavish opening of “the treasure of the Bible, . . . so that richer fare may be provided for the faithful at the table of God’s word” (§51). This goal, however, was accomplished not by widening the traditional set of pericopes, but by creating a completely new lectionary in which the existing structure of lessons and chants was changed profoundly and a completely new selection of pericopes was adopted (in two- and three-year cycles), giving up the system certified in sources included in the development line of the Roman liturgy from the seventh century.³⁴

However, not all motivations and postulates underlying actual liturgical changes can be seen to be as positive as the ones just mentioned (putting aside the issue of their practical implementation). Since the time of Pius XII (1939–1958), in the discourse of some Catholic circles, the “political” viewpoint began to come to the fore,³⁵ according to which the existing liturgical forms were outdated and excessively complicated

³⁴ On the pre-Vatican II lectionaries see, e.g., Anscar J. Chupungco, *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, vol. 3, *The Eucharist* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1999), 178–81. For a critical review of the post-conciliar lectionary, see Peter Kwasniewski, “The Reform of the Lectionary,” in *Liturgy in the Twenty-First Century: Contemporary Issues and Perspectives*, ed. Alcuin Reid (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 287–320, rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2019/05/50-years-of-religious-and-cultural.html; see also Kwasniewski, “Not Just More Readings But Different Readings,” in Matthew Hazell, *Index Lectionum: A Comparative Table of Readings for the Ordinary and Extraordinary Forms of the Roman Rite* (n.p.: Lectionary Study Press, 2016), vii–xxix, rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2019/01/not-just-more-scripture-but-different.html.

³⁵ Aidan Nichols calls the period after World War II a “political phase” of the liturgical movement, “when it set out to be a force on the stage of the world Church,” and when a “manifesto of popular active participation in the liturgical rite totally overshadowed mere attempts to understand and draw a spirituality from the existing Liturgy” (*Looking at the Liturgy: A Critical View of Its Contemporary Form* [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996], ch. 1). Mark Searle also points to a split within the liturgical movement: “The first [liturgical movement] focused on liturgical formation and social transformation, bringing people to the liturgy so that they might be empowered to go out and change the social order. The second focused on liturgical change and ecclesial renewal, bringing the liturgy to the people so that they might participate fully and help bring the Church into the modern world” (*Called to Participate: Theological, Ritual, and Social Perspective*, ed. Barbara Searle and Anne Y. Koester [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2006], 12). His assessment of this fact seems ambivalent. On the one hand, he describes both tendencies within the liturgical movement as a “symphony”; on the other, however, he notes and emphasizes that the second dominated the first and that the essential insights which the first brought have been lost.

and required more or less radical transformation. Within this branch of the liturgical movement there appeared two groups of thought. On the one hand was the academic historical approach (e.g., Joseph Jungmann's influential "corruption theory of liturgical history"),³⁶ and on the other hand convictions that stressed the primacy of pastoral care over liturgical tradition.³⁷ The political perspective included such postulates and goals regarding liturgy as (for example): the elimination of repetitions accumulated over the centuries, theological corrections, restoration of "noble simplicity," return to the sources, adaptation to the needs and mentality of modern man, making rituals more comprehensible, deferring to other Christian communities (especially Protestant), and so on. During the post-conciliar period they gained dominance and were accepted as the motivational foundation of liturgical reform through which the Roman liturgy has undergone a thorough transformation. Here are some points concerning the most important and obvious issues:

- While a very basic structure of the Roman Mass was maintained, there were many changes in the *ordo missae* (elimination of such elements as prayers at the foot of the altar, the Offertory, the Placeat, the Last Gospel; removal of obligatory use of Propers; introduction of many possible variants to celebrate a given part of the Mass);
- Most of the ritual gestures of the celebrant and acolytes were abolished, including those expressing reverence toward the Body and Blood of the Lord;
- Many prayers were created by experts, either *de novo* (e.g., newly created prayers of "Preparing Gifts" that replaced the euchology of the Offertory, as well as several new anaphoras) or based on old liturgical texts, part of which has never been in use in the history of the Roman rite (e.g., the case of the "anaphora of Hippolytus" from *Apostolic Tradition* as a basis of Second Eucharistic Prayer in the missal of Paul VI).³⁸

³⁶ Thomas Day, *Why Catholics Can't Sing: The Culture of Catholicism and the Triumph of Bad Taste* (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 92.

³⁷ As Reid shows, figures like Jungmann paradoxically combined both these tendencies in their thoughts (*Organic Development*, 164–72).

³⁸ During the work on new missal, the "anaphora of Hippolytus" was thought to be the earliest preserved example of genuine Roman liturgical prayer and that is why it was used as inspiration and textual foundation of one of the newly formed anaphoras (Second Eucharistic Prayer). This is still shared by Piero Marini (as

- The liturgical language of Latin (in use in the Roman Church since the fourth century) was in practice all but abandoned.
- The sacramental rites were completely reformulated or simply created *de novo*.
- The church space and the way of moving in it were fundamentally changed: *versus populum* orientation; different altar setting, often combined with the destruction of old altars; removal of the communion rail; elimination of the visible delineation of the nave from the choir, and chancel (already long in preparation by the increasing truncation of relocation of the choir-space from the Baroque period onward), a reduced and changed system of gestures; and more.³⁹

“the common opinion of scholars”) in his book, *Challenging Reform: Realizing the Vision of Liturgical Renewal 1963–1975*, ed. Mark R. Francis, John R. Page, and Keith F. Pecklers (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2007), 108. More recent historical research has called into question both the Roman provenance of the *Apostolic Tradition* and the belief that it reflected Roman liturgical practice in the third century. Moreover, it is quite likely that it describes a liturgy that has never actually been celebrated. See: Paul F. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship: Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 80–83; John F. Baldovin, “Hippolytus and the *Apostolic Tradition*: Recent Research and Commentary,” *Theological Studies* 64 (2003): 520–42; Daniel G. Van Slyke, “The Study of Early Christian Worship,” in Reid, *T & T Clark Companion to Liturgy*, 45–48. For detailed analysis of the techniques used by commissions of experts for creating new orations (the arbitrary alterations to ancient texts, the shifts in theological emphasis, the processes of joining two different collects—sometimes from different rites—to make an entirely new oration and so on), see Lauren Pristas, *The Collects of the Roman Missals: A Comparative Study of the Sundays in Proper Seasons before and after the Second Vatican Council* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

³⁹ Compare this enumeration with a more general description of John F. Baldovin, “The Twentieth Century Reform of the Liturgy: Outcomes and Prospects,” *Institute of Liturgical Studies Occasional Papers* 126 (2017): 1–13, at 4–5: “The implementation of the reform, under Bugnini’s tutelage and involving dozens of experts in the fields of history, theology and pastoral practice, resulted in the complete vernacularization of the liturgy, reorientation of the presiding minister vis-à-vis the assembly, an extensive and even radical reform of the order of Mass, and a major overhaul of the liturgical year, not to mention a complete revision of every sacramental liturgy and daily liturgical prayer.” It is worth noting that Baldovin is by no means an opponent of these reforms, so he is not intending to exaggerate post-conciliar changes for polemical goals. To visualize the extent of the changes from an Orthodox point of view, one can refer to Kwasniewski’s comparison: “Let us run with this thought experiment for a moment. Imagine the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom as our starting point. Now, take away

The very fact of the huge scope of liturgical change is obvious to any unprejudiced observer. The real liturgy of the Catholic Church has been transformed in such a way that between the older and newer forms lies a broad border of discontinuity or rupture.⁴⁰ It was (had to be) directly experienced by participants, priests, and believers, regardless of any (even the deepest and most remarkable) theological concepts that were created by the reformers' minds, and in the light of which it appeared as in itself not making any significant change⁴¹ or as introducing substantiated or necessary changes,⁴² as well as whether these changes were received as positive or negative. In fact, it can be said that the experience of this discontinuity was the basic objective effect of the reform. This striking fact often escapes the attention of its defenders looking at it from a theological or historical point of view.

What Was the Reformers' Theory of Tradition?

Speaking in John Baldovin's language, the liturgical reform was "earthshaking."⁴³ Such rapid and radical transformations are not usually typical of tradition. The question arises, therefore, how people who were consultors and authors of all these changes understood tradition and its relationship to forms of worship. Theoretically, in the Catholic Church, it is not possible to negate the notion of tradition and its meaning. At the level of the description of the liturgy and its development, this truth is reflected in

most of the litanies; substitute a newly-composed anaphora (with only the words of consecration remaining the same); change the kontakia, prokeimena, troparia, and readings; greatly reduce the priestly prayers, incensations, and signs of reverence; and while we're at it, hand cup and spoon to the laity, so they can tuck in like grown-ups" ("Hyperpapalism and Liturgical Mutation").

⁴⁰ As Reid puts it, "'rupture' sees no difficulty in dismissing that which has been handed down and developed through the ages and starting afresh in the light of perceived contemporary needs without regard for what has gone before" ("After *Sacrosanctum Concilium*—Continuity or Rupture?," in Reid, *T & T Clark Companion to Liturgy*, 299).

⁴¹ I think, for example, of Paul VI's argument in his Address to a General Audience, November, 19, 1969, where the pope announced "The Mass will be celebrated in a rather different manner from that in which we have been accustomed to celebrate it in the last four centuries," at the same time trying to show that it should not raise any doubts, because "Nothing has been changed of the substance of our traditional Mass" (Paul VI, "The Mass Is the Same [Address of November 19, 1969]," ewtn.com/catholicism/library/mass-is-the-same-8968).

⁴² See, e.g.: Baldovin, *Reforming the Liturgy*; Kevin W. Irwin, *What We Have Done, What We Have Failed to Do: Assessing the Liturgical Reforms of Vatican II* (New York: Paulist, 2013).

⁴³ Baldovin, "Twentieth-Century Reform," 4.

the conciliar constitution, which says that “there must be no innovations unless the good of the Church genuinely and certainly requires them; and care must be taken that any new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already existing” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* §23). However, the examples of radical transformation of liturgical forms cited above show that the form of worship had to be torn away from the concept of tradition or that the latter had to be reinterpreted in a way that would somehow reconcile the concept of tradition and radical liturgical change. The former was not an option, so it seems that one needs to look for answers in the latter.⁴⁴ An explanation (or at least one of the possible explanations) can be found in Archbishop Annibale Bugnini, “the major architect of the liturgical reform,”⁴⁵ in his reminiscence work *The Reform of the Liturgy, 1948–1975*.

Presenting his own understanding of the meaning of the principles of “healthy tradition” and “legitimate development” as part of the liturgical reform,⁴⁶ Bugnini puts them in the context of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §21.⁴⁷ In his interpretation of this fragment, which by comparison to it, is significantly more radical, he states that:

The liturgy has two dimensions: one invisible, unchanging, and everlasting; the other, human, visible, and changeable. What is of divine institution is evidently untouchable and unchangeable. The same cannot be said of what the Church, whose action extends through time and covers the entire world, has established in order to clothe the divine elements of worship in signs and rites that will bring to light the riches and hidden meaning of the mystery.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ See e.g., Klöckener, “Concepts of History and Tradition,” 85–103. According to his reconstruction, the understanding of the traditional liturgy up to modern times has been based on the material continuity of visible forms, while the introduction of the reformed books (after Vatican II) was, according to the author, associated with the necessity of “a new approach toward tradition” (97). In other words, tradition ceased to be regarded as normative, but because its concept could not be abandoned, it had to be reinvented by hermeneutical actions.

⁴⁵ Baldwin, *Reforming the Liturgy*, 53.

⁴⁶ See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, §23.

⁴⁷ See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, §21: “For the liturgy is made up of immutable elements divinely instituted, and of elements subject to change. These not only may but ought to be changed with the passage of time if they have suffered from the intrusion of anything out of harmony with the inner nature of the liturgy or have become unsuited to it.”

⁴⁸ Annibale Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy, 1948–1975*, trans. Matthew J. O’Connell (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1990), 43–44. He had expressed

Further, Bugnini elaborates on the above distinction using the category of tradition. He admits that in this “visible and human” part there are elements sanctified by the ancient tradition and therefore “to some extent untouchable.” However, he immediately counteracts this statement with a rhetorical question about what, in fact, “apart from the properly theological content of the liturgy,” deserves to be called “traditional.”⁴⁹ An analogous view can be found in the conciliar constitution on the liturgy, which directly separates the “rites” from their “substance,” recommending that these first should be simplified with the latter’s preservation.⁵⁰ However, what is not defined is their interrelationship. This ambiguity allows the understanding of “the properly theological content of the liturgy” or its “substance” to be confined to very narrow categories, for example sacramental effectiveness.

Finally, Bugnini concludes that “authentic tradition consists not in restoring what others have done, but in rediscovering the spirit that brought those things into existence, and that would do other, completely different things at other times.”⁵¹ The embodiment of tradition itself in the liturgical forms therefore in no way continues to be visible through its historical duration and continuity of particular ritual forms based on handing on (*traditio*), but rather through an a-historical (or even a-temporal) concept referring to some abstract, invisible, and primordial “spirit” (“properly theological content of the liturgy”), which underlies all of them, but only within an exclusively instrumental relationship: they are its tool of expression related to a given state of culture, a type of clothing that it wears to adapt to the requirements of specific times. Reaching this “spirit,” getting to know it and understand it, should, according to Bugnini, allow us to construct a liturgy that would maintain the requirement of healthy tradition and at the same time be deprived of elements that “may have come down to us as the fruit of a particular setting and a particular

the same view much earlier in “Why a Liturgical Reform?,” *Worship* 29, no. 10 (1954–1955): 562–69, especially 565: “In its essence the Liturgy partakes of the divine immutability; in outward form it shows the mark of the times.” Bugnini’s approach is broadly in line with the concepts developed by Enlightenment theologians. On the latter, see Benedikt Kranemann, “The Notion of Tradition in Liturgy,” in *History and Religion: Narrating a Religious Past*, ed. Bernd-Christian Otto, Susanne Rau, and Jörg Rübke (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 333–53, at 340.

⁴⁹ See Bugnini, *Reform of the Liturgy*, 44.

⁵⁰ See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, §50.

⁵¹ Bugnini, *Reform of the Liturgy*, 44.

occasion and which may no longer be, or be only with difficulty, visible witnesses to the reign of grace.”⁵²

So it turns out that what is really traditional in the liturgy is invisible. Bugnini agrees that the invisible is immutable—that is his reinterpretation of the immutability of tradition. The effect of this procedure is paradoxical: the “traditionality” of the liturgy is elevated by transferring it to the level of the idea, accessible only to intellectual cognition/discovery and purified of all historical and cultural “sediments,” while at the same time this immutability becomes obviously banal: what is invisible and untouchable simply cannot be changed. In the radical logic of this approach, any rite can be regarded as “traditional,” including one that is invented and composed from the beginning to the end without any connection or reference to earlier liturgical forms, but which *in the minds and intentions* of its creators and promoters will be considered as containing and/or giving the “properly theological content of the liturgy,” or its “spirit.”

From the point of view of this theoretical construction, people who would be predestined to discover and understand this spirit and clothe it in appropriate semiotic structures become a necessary element not only of liturgy reform but of the liturgical life of the Church in general. As Bugnini writes: “To rediscover the spirit: this requires research and review; a scrupulously careful and diligent determination of what makes up the sacred patrimony so that the valid appraisal may emerge objectively and, as it were, naturally and spontaneously from study, meditation, and prayer.”⁵³ “Research and review” can be carried out only by specialists, those who are competent to do them. The enumeration of adverbs—“objectively, naturally, spontaneously”—is just asking to have “organically” added to it. In fact, it seems that Bugnini proposes here a special kind of concept of “organic development of the liturgy,” which is to be free from the weakness associated with the not fully controlled and centuries-old process of shaping and establishing liturgical rites, which tends (according to him) to a fixation on their particular historical forms. In his version, it should rely on a scientific-and-prayerful research and evaluation process carried out by specialists. As a result, “a properly theological content of the liturgy” is to emerge in their minds “objectively, naturally, and spontaneously,” which, thanks to “the effort to make the rites speak the language of our own time,”⁵⁴ will provide contemporary people with rites that will be truly traditional and at the same time understandable, flexible,

⁵² Bugnini, *Reform of the Liturgy*, 45.

⁵³ Bugnini, *Reform of the Liturgy*, 44.

⁵⁴ Bugnini, *Reform of the Liturgy*, 45.

and adaptable. On this reading, “organic” would name the quality of the mental process of a selected group of experts and its effect.

In the light of the above analysis of Bugnini’s approach, we can see what theory of tradition served as the basis for understanding the relationship of tradition and liturgy in such a way that it allowed their material and visible continuity to be broken, while maintaining a nominal reference to the concept of tradition and traditionality.⁵⁵ In this approach, there is no room for the thought that it is the overall *modus* of worship, as the product of the specific, historical prayer tradition of the Church that constitutes the fundamental environment of faith and proper communion with God. Tradition understood as an integral heritage, not only doctrinal in the

⁵⁵ The question remains how popular this thinking was among other reformers. The matter is certainly complex and difficult to sum up clearly. Looking at, for example, the thought of such outstanding and significant authors for liturgical reform as Cipriano Vagaggini, O.S.B., one can see that, on the one hand, he understands the tradition of liturgy in terms of being “strongly anchored to the past, precisely to make the present generations live in connection with the past ones” (*Il senso teologico della liturgia: Saggio di liturgia teologica generale*, 4th ed. [Roma: Edizioni Paoline, 1965], 797 [translation mine]), while on the other hand, this does not prevent him from using rationalist criteria in assessing such deeply traditional elements of the liturgy as the Roman Canon. An approach that assesses a text so ancient and complex with overlapping successive layers according to criteria of structural simplicity and clarity, logical and natural continuity of thought, lack of repetition, and the quality and proportions of the theology it contains (cf. idem, *Il canone della Messa e la riforma liturgica* [Torino: Elle Dici, 1966], 71) imposes foreign rules on the investigated text and must necessarily lead to it being considered full of defects—see Bartłomiej Matczak, *Cipriano Vagaggini OSB i reforma liturgiczna. Studium na podstawie zbiorów archiwów w Camaldoli* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Benedyktynów Tyniec, 2013), 200–12. More importantly, however, it shows that the paradigm adopted by Vagaggini allowed or perhaps compelled him to approach the *par excellence* traditional text (created as a result of gradual cumulative development, which was in very long and constant use and was supported by the authority of the Council of Trent [see *Doctrina et canones de sanctissimo missae sacrificio*, §4]) as something that can and should be improved basing on the rational judgment of a single specialist (or the opinion of a group of specialists) and defects and needs noticed by him (them). Discussions concerning Eucharistic prayers and proposed changes in the Roman Canon by other authors (e.g., Küng or Amon, whom Vagaggini critically engages—see Matczak, *Cipriano Vagaggini*, 216–17) show that it was a universal approach. To be precise, Vagaggini himself believed that the “defects” of the Roman Canon he identified nevertheless do not allow us thoroughly to rebuild it, among other reasons because of its deep connection with the tradition of the Roman liturgy. Therefore, he proposed leaving the Canon unchanged, but also creating a new one that would be free from the defects of that old (Matczak, *Cipriano Vagaggini*, 217).

sense of established dogmatic formulas, conciliar decisions, and so on but fundamentally, as an inherited ritual way of sharing in the sacrifice that the Son gives to the Father in the Holy Spirit, is not treated here as a significant defining element of the *lex credendi*, let alone as a norm for its own development.

Papal Authority in Liturgical Reform

The new liturgy as a product of a team of scholars and their understanding of tradition would not be able, by itself or on the basis of the authority of its creators, to supplant the liturgical practice, even taking into account existing abuses, the widespread legal (non-theological) approach to worship, and many other real problems faced by pre-conciliar Catholic liturgical life. However, coming after the Council of Trent, which in fact set a precedent in this matter, it was the pope who was to introduce the post-Vatican II reforms. They were unanimously understood as a papal enterprise, making use of the pope's authority, and imposing the obligation to receive a "renewed" liturgy on the whole of the Latin Church.

Pope Paul VI himself may not have fully shared Bugnini's (and others reformers') rationalist conception of tradition, but some of its elements, as well as openness to constructivism and archeologism, were included in the conciliar constitution itself⁵⁶ and served to legitimize the hermeneutics of the real nature and scope of changes introduced to the Catholic liturgy. The constitution *Missale Romanum* presents the reforms of Paul VI as a parallel to or congruent with the principles of the reforms after the Council of Trent. These were preceded by a commission appointed by Saint Pius V for the review of old liturgical codices and works of Christian writers which, as said in the bull *Quo Primum*, allowed the pope "to restore the Missal to the pristine form and rite of holy fathers" ("ad pristinam Missale ipsum sanctorum Patrum normam ac ritum restituerunt"). On the other hand, in Paul VI's text this is described as merely the first stage of a process that today can be developed further, because (in terms of Paul VI's perspective) the "oldest liturgical sources" had been discovered since then, the "liturgical formulas of the Eastern Church" were newly analyzed, and "liturgical disciplines" were further developed. In other words, the constitution *Missale Romanum* seems to imply that, if in the time of Pius V, early and Eastern liturgical sources had been available, and if analytical tools had been as developed as in our own times, the post-Trent Mass might

⁵⁶ See Th. Kocik, "The 'Reform of the Reform' in Broad Context: Re-Engaging the Living Tradition," *Usus Antiquior. A Journal Dedicated to the Sacred Liturgy* 3, no. 2 (2012): 102–14, at 109.

well have been returned to a form that resembled the Mass in, for example, second-century Rome. At no point, however, is it specified precisely on what basis and by what criteria the achievements of historical science, new source discoveries, or the awareness of the body of Eastern liturgical traditions would or should be used in the reform of the liturgy of the Roman rite in its concrete givenness. It is also apparent that these criteria were somewhat diverse, selective, and arbitrary, and tended not to treat the traditional form of the liturgy as an essential premise for “renewed” forms.

The official description of the understanding of tradition in the post-conciliar reform is contained in the introduction (proemium) to the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (§6–9), added to this document in the 1970 edition.⁵⁷ Its addition was caused by criticism directed at its content as promulgated on April 3, 1969,⁵⁸ and was intended to ensure that the new missal would be impeccable in terms of the rules of faith and tradition. Looking at this introduction and its identification of tradition in the light of the earlier analysis of Bugnini’s views, one can notice the closeness of these approaches. It anchors the “traditionality” of the liturgy in *Sacro-sanctum Concilium* §50’s repetition of Pius V’s order that rites be restored “to the original norms of the holy fathers” (“from the fact that the same words are used, it can be noted how the two Roman Missals, although four centuries have intervened, embrace one and the same tradition”),⁵⁹ but further states that today we must understand this rule differently:

Hence, the “norm of the holy Fathers” requires not only the preservation of what our immediate forebears have handed on to us, but also an understanding and a more profound pondering of the Church’s entire past ages and of all the ways in which her one faith has been expressed in forms of human and social culture so greatly differing among themselves, indeed, as those prevailing in the Semitic, Greek, and Latin regions. Moreover, this broader view allows us to see how the Holy Spirit endows the People of God with a marvelous fidelity in preserving the unalterable deposit of faith, even though there is a very great variety of prayers and rites.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ The first *editio typica* of 1969 does not contain this introduction—see Maurizio Barba, *Institutio Generalis Missali Romani: Textus, Synopsis, Variationes* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2006), 390–408.

⁵⁸ Bugnini, *Reform of the Liturgy*, 287.

⁵⁹ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, §6.

⁶⁰ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, §9.

Given that this is a fragment of the introduction to the liturgical book very different from its predecessor, the words “*not only* the preservation of what our immediate forebears have handed on to us” (my emphasis) can be considered a largely rhetorical procedure. According to this document, reaching true tradition is about understanding how “the one faith” has been expressed in history in different languages and cultures. It is nothing else but Bugnini’s search for “the spirit that brought those things into existence, and that would do other, completely different things at other times.”⁶¹ Establishing this has become and continues to be possible thanks to “innumerable writings of scholars,” scientific research on early Christian liturgy and the Fathers of the Church. Therefore, the “tradition/traditionality” of the liturgy is primarily determined by what specialists will extract from its history (in the broadest sense). It can be said that the understanding of the concept of tradition in terms of material continuity is replaced here by history, understood as a reservoir of elements that can be used in the construction of rituals adapted to the dynamically changing “needs of our time” according to the rules abstracted through the analysis of different cultural and linguistic expressions of “the one faith.” As Klöckener sums up this reinterpretation of tradition: “This theological concept of tradition and reform makes history indispensable for the future revisions of liturgical books in the Catholic Church. Crucial is, however, that the church should never stick to a certain period of history and its tradition.”⁶²

It is at this point that the fundamental difference between the reforms of Pius V and Paul VI can be summarized. The reforms of Pius V consisted in codifying the existing custom certified both by known practiced rites and by quantified sources, and then in mandating that it be accepted wherever a given local rite was younger than two hundred years. On the other hand, the reforms of Paul VI consisted, in varying degrees, of first breaking down the existing custom into its prime factors—with sharp reduction of some of its parts and multiplications of others—then both mixing and textually revising existing euchology, adding to both euchology and

⁶¹ Bugnini, *Reform of the Liturgy*, 44.

⁶² Klöckener, “Concepts of History and Tradition,” 98–99. A similar concept seems to be propounded by Taft when he writes that “the Latin Catholic West does not need to return nostalgically to a dead and gone-for-ever medieval or Tridentine past,” while recommending reaching for the riches of the whole Western tradition, especially these rediscovered by twentieth-century *ressourcement* (“Between Progress and Nostalgia,” 37–39). Due to the constricted understanding of tradition in terms of material continuity, this means reaching into the reservoir of history available through the work of experts.

the *ordo* elements which were new or came from other liturgical sources (sometimes sources which had never previously been in use within the framework of the Roman rite), and so on, and then requiring compliance with these changes, mandating use of new liturgical books in the entire Church, combined with, in essence, the complete prohibition of traditional and ancient practice and texts.⁶³ Hence in terms of the approach to real, visible, and tangible liturgical tradition, the two reforms, separated by a period of four hundred years, were fundamentally different.⁶⁴ However, they had one common denominator in that each established a new precedent in Church history regarding acts of papal authority. This consisted of

⁶³ See e.g., Alcuin Reid, "The *Usus Antiquior*—Its History and Importance after The Second Vatican Council," in *T & T Clark Companion to Liturgy*, 455–82. The post-conciliar reform caused a long and stormy discussion on the question whether promulgating new liturgical forms was tantamount to abrogating the old ones and whether the latter could be banned. The consensus of the committee of cardinals appointed by Pope John Paul II in 1986 to resolve this case, and above all Benedict XVI's *motu proprio Summorum Pontificum* and the accompanying papal letter to the bishops, deny that the old liturgy was abrogated or banned. However, this did not end the disputes (in fact *Summorum Pontificum* intensified them rather), and some Catholic scholars and canonists criticize these settlements. See: Baldovin, *Reforming the Liturgy*, 130–33; Chad J. Glendinning, "Was the 1962 *Missale Romanum* Abrogated? A Canonical Analysis in the Light of *Summorum Pontificum*," *Worship* 85, no. 1 (2011): 15–37; Andrea Grillo, *Beyond Pius V: Conflicting Interpretations of the Liturgical Reform* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2013), 94–118; Francis L. Agnoli, "An Overview of *Summorum Pontificum* and Its Accompanying Documents," in *The Liturgy Documents*, vol. 4, *Supplemental Documents for Parish Worship, Devotions, Formation, and Catechesis* (Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications, 2013), 632–60, at 635–36.

⁶⁴ Nathan Mitchell, in discussion with Ratzinger, attempts to polemically reverse the proportions of "non-traditionality" of both reforms, writing that "the liturgical reforms prompted by the Council of Trent were far more drastic, unprecedented, and untraditional than those which followed Vatican II" ("The Amen Corner: Rereading Reform," *Worship* 71, no. 5 (1997): 453–66, at 465). Although he rightly emphasizes the general innovation of the post-Trent reform from the perspective of customary Western liturgical pluralism, he omits two very important facts: (1) leaving intact traditional diocesan and religious rites at least two hundred years old, and requiring the consent of the bishop or the entire chapter if communities celebrating them would like to switch over to the Roman rite; (2) the codified Roman rite, because of the emphasis on the material continuity of ritual forms, remained in a far-reaching similarity to the vast majority of liturgical customs of the time—it was not a rupture itself and did not cause the experience of rupture. As Reid puts it: "Neither clergy nor laymen were astounded by this reform" (*Organic Development*, 44); see also Fiedrowicz, *Traditional Mass*, for many examples of continuity long before and long after Trent.

the exercise by the pope of the right to decide on the prescribed forms of liturgy (with the difference outlined above) as well as the right, by papal decree, to dictate the abandonment of current liturgical practices in favor of those established by a papal *fiat*.⁶⁵

There remains the question of whether there is in fact a continuum between Saint Pius V and the popes of the twentieth century, starting with Saint Pius X, whose reform of the breviary disturbed the continuity of forms and set a precedent in accepting non-liturgical criteria as justification for liturgical changes. According to Geoffrey Hull, this continuum exists and manifests itself in various forms: “top-down” (e.g., the appointment of the Congregation of Rites and Ceremonies by Sixtus V in 1588) and at a “grassroots” level (e.g., the relinquishment, by some religious orders, of their own rites in exchange for the codified papal liturgy, the activity of Guéranger in favor of the acceptance of the Roman Missal by all French dioceses during the mid-nineteenth century, etc.), aimed at ever deeper centralization and unification of the Catholic liturgy.⁶⁶ During this period there were changes in how the rights of popes were understood (both by the popes themselves and by the rest of the Church), such that rejection of the traditional form of worship based on papal authority—which in the times of Pius V and later popes was inconceivable—became possible. As Hull puts it, “greater central control . . . would later be the

⁶⁵ One could argue that this analogy is illusory, because the conciliar constitution, by allowing various adaptations and giving the right to approve or reject them “to various kinds of competent territorial bodies of bishops” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, §22), as Vagaggini put it a few days after it was adopted by the Council, “sanctions the foundation of a decentralization in the area of liturgy” (“I principi generali della riforma liturgica approvati dal Concilio,” *L'osservatore Romano*, Dec. 9, 1963; English trans. at “Father Vagaggini’s Article on Liturgy Document,” vaticaniat50.wordpress.com/2012/12/10/father-vagagginis-article-on-liturgy-document/). In reality, however, this “decentralization”—as later events showed—concerned only some details of the liturgy *already reformed at the central level*. The liturgical “freedom” in the post-conciliar period was paradoxical: the whole Church was obliged to adopt reformed rites that could then be adapted to specific conditions (e.g., translated into national languages) and modified to some extent, although Rome’s approval was still required. In turn, the opportunity to participate in old liturgical forms was practically abolished and banned in an authoritarian way, in a vivid style reminiscent of overbearing phrases from *Quo Primum*—yet with the difference that, compared to the implementation of the post-Trent reform, the one after Vatican II was carried out much more quickly and much more radically. In this sense, decentralization in the liturgy was largely apparent, not real.

⁶⁶ See Hull, *Banished Heart*, 156–87.

principal channel of liturgical subversion in the pontificate of Paul VI.⁶⁷ The history of the resistance of some Catholics to the liturgical reform of Paul VI and Rome's reaction demonstrate that, because of the fact that a new liturgy had been introduced by the pope's act of will, the attachment to inherited forms and the desire to participate in them by some in the body of the Church have consequently been seen by many decision-makers as adverse, attacking the unity of the Church, and undermining papal authority.⁶⁸ In essence, these "divergent" opinions have become something to be suspicious of and considered harmful, which must consequently be resisted with all severity. And yet we are talking not about some heretical whims, but about opposition to the rejection of a liturgy which for four hundred years was at the core of the Church's life, and whose fundamental shape had been established within the living tradition long before Pius V ordered its codification.

The second plane on which one can see the continuity and a kind of logical connection between the reforms of Pius V and Paul VI is the problematic relationship between tradition and liturgical forms. The post-Trent reform, by codifying the existing traditional rite, by putting it in typical books and by then imposing this on the whole Church (though with known exceptions, and, as in the case of Catholic France, not in an absolutely rigorous way⁶⁹), has limited and effectively halted its development and supplanted a large part of its various local versions. In this sense, the living local liturgical traditions have effectively been gradually replaced with a traditional but strongly unified and centrally controlled system of worship adopted in accordance with the authority of the pope. This was a necessary process to some extent, due to the chaos mentioned above and the threat of Protestant influence. At the same time, however, it led to the liturgical alienation of the faithful and the loss of the liturgy's role as a carrier of living tradition⁷⁰ in favor of liturgical tradition understood mainly in juridical terms as "official forms of church worship,"⁷¹ in

⁶⁷ Hull, *Banished Heart*, 173.

⁶⁸ See Reid, "*Usus Antiquior*," 460.

⁶⁹ Most of the French dioceses did not accept the post-Trent reform and this situation lasted until the second half of the nineteenth century. And then their change to the Tridentine rite did not happen at the initiative of the popes. See Hull, *The Banished Heart*, 171: "Popes Gregory XVI and Pius IX were both favourable to the spread of the modern Roman liturgy in France but they considered this a desideratum rather than a real necessity, and they were moreover reluctant to force a change that would be resented by the majority of French Catholics."

⁷⁰ See: Gamber, *Reform of the Roman Liturgy*, 16; Taft, "Spirit," 148–49.

⁷¹ Louis Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1956), 1 (cited in Hull,

which “traditionality” was guaranteed by papal authority. This thinking is reflected in the words of Bugnini when referring to a letter from a group of French clergy sent to Paul VI in protest against the imposition of a new Mass, which they perceived as “Protestant”:

This letter is an obvious rejection of ecclesiastical authority. The question is often asked how devout persons, attached to tradition, could maintain that an apostolical constitution, one of the most solemn of papal documents and one that comes close to involving papal infallibility, could sponsor or even impose a liturgical book not in conformity with Church doctrine.⁷²

It is clear that, in his view, “an attachment to tradition” should, in and of itself, lead all those offended by the liturgical changes to the conviction that, if they were introduced by the pope, they are certainly consistent with tradition, even against all reasoning and experience.⁷³

The Consequences for Catholic Understanding of Tradition

The actions of the twentieth-century popes (especially Pius X, Pius XII, and Paul VI) indicate that, in this period, the concept of papal authority over the liturgical tradition has passed to a more or less absolutist level: the will of the pope overrules all preceding tradition and in fact can be seen as creative of tradition as such. Until the post-conciliar times, the popes’ practical influence on the level of collective understanding of tradition was relatively small. With few exceptions, breviary reform affected only the clergy and religious. As a matter of fact, some of them (primarily from religious

Banished Heart, 162). Bouyer found this definition in one of the then used handbooks of liturgy.

⁷² Bugnini, *Reform of the Liturgy*, 290. This type of argument, expressing rhetorical surprise that anyone could possibly have any doubts about or difficulties with the reform when such great authorities are behind it seems to be one of Bugnini’s main polemical strategies. See, e.g., Bugnini, “The Consilium and Liturgical Reform,” *The Furrow* 19, no. 3 (1968): 177–79, at 177: “I will spare you the details of the negative reactions the Instruction [he means *Tres Abhinc Annos*] occasioned—the hidden doctrinal ‘tendencies,’ the theological and pastoral errors, the democratization, the vandalism, and so on. None of this has any basis of truth. How can people suspect us of extremist tendencies in a document which has passed the scrutiny of hundreds of experts and of the Church’s hierarchy?”

⁷³ In this context, it is significant to mention Vagaggini’s statement that the approval of the rites by the pope, even within the ordinary magisterium, means that “these liturgies can be considered in practice as immune from errors against faith and morals” (*Il senso teologico*, 489; [translation mine]).

orders) expressed strong reservations because it imposed a new Psalter and calendar, as well as changes to those orders that had their own office.⁷⁴ What the faithful could experience for themselves were the changes in the calendar.⁷⁵ In turn, although the reforms of Pius XII concerned the most important period of the year (Holy Week and Pentecost), as a consequence of the generally low level of interest and engagement with the *Triduum Sacrum* (as well as with the Pentecost Vigil) amongst the faithful,⁷⁶ these changes passed largely unnoticed. Hence, however deep, they did not generate the effect of a collapse of the significance of tradition. In stark contrast were the reforms of Paul VI, which altered the entire liturgy of the Roman rite and introduced mandatory and binding non-traditional forms of worship. In this context, assertions that the conciliar vision not only of the liturgy but also of the Church departed from the earlier ultramontane character of the period after the French Revolution take on a slightly different, ironic sense.⁷⁷ Looking at the nature of the reform, it is possible to reach exactly the opposite interpretation, namely, that it is in the liturgical reform and the attempt to create a “new Church”—making full use, after all, of the power of papal authority—that this ultramontane culture and its anti-traditional potential have reached their peak.

William D. Dinges, analyzing the sociological background of the so-called post-Vatican II “worship wars,” noticed that liturgical reform

left many Catholics with the impression that what had been viewed as heaven-sent and absolute in form and structure was permeable and subject to redefinition and territorial variation. Changes in Catholicism’s core corporate ritual also awakened the troubling possibility that other constitutive elements of the Church were not an objective given, but that they, too, had been (and could be) sociologically and historically constructed and reconstructed.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ See, e.g., William Bonniwell, *A History of the Dominican Liturgy* (New York: Joseph F. Wagner, 1944), 347–58.

⁷⁵ See Hemming, *Worship as a Revelation*, 126–27.

⁷⁶ Changing this situation was one of the main purposes of Pius XII’s reform. The results, however, were uneven and four years after the introduction of the reformed Easter Vigil, the participation of the faithful was still not as numerous as had been expected (Reid, *Organic Development*, 222).

⁷⁷ E.g., Massimo Faggioli, *True Reform: Liturgy and Ecclesiology in Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2012), 53.

⁷⁸ William D. Dinges, “Ritual Conflict as Social Conflict: Liturgical Reform in the Roman Catholic Church,” *Sociological Analysis* 48, no. 2 (1987): 138–57, at 142–43. See also Uwe Michael Lang, *Signs of the Holy One: Liturgy, Ritual, and Expression of the Sacred* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2015), 151.

This sociological description of the disintegrative consequences of liturgical change on the traditionality of Catholicism can, in my opinion, be amplified by pointing out two key implications of linking these reforms with papal authority. If the liturgy is a synecdoche of tradition, the act of reform and the essentially mandatory introduction of new, non-traditional forms of worship was a clear statement of absolute papal authority over the liturgy, and therefore also over tradition itself. In my opinion, this statement had two key implications:

- If concrete, visible, inherited ritual forms are no longer a basic binding premise for the further development of the rite, then power (above all Rome's) is the only reference point and regulator: primarily in terms of the liturgy as such, but also over every other form of tradition (doctrine, discipline, the Christian way of life, etc.);
- If the pope can introduce new, non-traditional forms of worship solely on the grounds that he has the authority to do so, it means that the entire content of tradition is able to be modified according to a single "volitional" power exercised by a single individual.⁷⁹ This created consequences regarding the fundamental understanding of the basis of papal authority that, in fact, were adverse and, somewhat paradoxically, undermined it. By introducing non-traditional forms of worship and prohibiting the former ones (effectively a denial of the authority of tradition), the pope and other bishops diminished and, ultimately, undermined their own authority. Such authority without the foundation of tradition is, for all practical intents, baseless. So by their actions, these popes opened the way not only to the denial of particular ritual forms and the wider content of tradition, but also to a denial of their own ability and right to counteract errors among the faithful by demanding their

⁷⁹ According to Hemming, the prior and deeper foundation of this shift was the rationalist objectification of the liturgy, its transfer to the sphere of the ideas of human reason, whose real liturgy is to be only a representation: "It could quite properly be argued that these changes were only possible because the direction in which they were driven had, in a sense, as changes already occurred in the minds of the experts and theologians who recommended them. The objectification of the sacred species of the Eucharist has been traced, with degrees of success, by Henri Cardinal de Lubac in his fundamental work *Corpus Mysticum*; the alterations to the Breviary exhibited, as László Dobszay and others have argued, an objectification of the liturgy as a whole—as something subject to papal fiat" (*Worship as a Revelation*, 143).

obedience. Surely obedience to authority is nonsensical if that same authority no longer has a legitimate basis. Even Matthew 16:18 and Vatican I's interpretation of it, for example, depend on the preceding Catholic tradition of interpretation; it is not by papal *fiat* that popes have their legitimate authority, but by the will of Christ *as* perceived and transmitted in the maternal memory of the Church. The same Spirit that maintains integrity of doctrine and hierarchical charisms also maintains the integrity and orthodoxy, as well as the authority, of liturgical tradition. To deny assistance in one these areas is to deny it in the others.

The influence of both of these implications has been reflected in a certain basic polarization of positions in the post-conciliar Church. Broadly described, one point of view is a "conservative" emphasis on—more or less—blind obedience to ecclesiastical authorities (especially to the pope), regardless of whether their words or actions are actually in accordance with the Church's tradition (even as codified in earlier papal and conciliar documents); the other point of view is the "liberal" rejection of both tradition and obedience: essentially taking power in one's own hands, arbitrarily deciding on issues of faith and morals. These attitudes appear to represent contrary positions, but in fact they represent two aspects of the same issue, which is the crisis of tradition. Tradition itself ceased being a central norm or standard to which we could turn to look for tools to assess potential developments in the liturgy, the proper understanding of dogmas, indications for moral choices, and so on. It is clear that these represent two extremes of opinion. In between these polarities, there is a diversity of opinion, both individual and collective; for sure there are also people and entire groups (e.g., some religious communities) which to some extent break out of this dialectic. But it is clear to me that present-day Catholic identity and everyday practice of faith has been deeply affected on all levels—from personal to organizational—by these trends.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the question arises about the effect of this situation on the potential for the reestablishment of full communion between the Orthodox and Catholic churches. This strikes me as being a significant and problematic issue. One factor in this is that the pope's authority and control over liturgy and tradition, sanctioned in the Western Catholic Church by liturgical reforms, is not only a foreign concept, but even profoundly inappropriate to the Orthodox. The problem is more entrenched in the Catholic mainstream, because under the influence of the trends discussed

above, there is very little to no understanding of the importance of tradition as an integral legacy to be continued and implemented at all levels of Christian life. Hence this is a meta-theological situation that goes beyond divergences at the theological level. The Roman church has undergone a profound transformation resulting—by means of the liturgical reform—in the ultimate primacy of power over tradition. This transformation has subsequently affected the key meta-theological dimension, a critical determinant upon the success of future dialogue and rapprochement. In my opinion, until Catholicism rediscovers its identity as tradition-constituted and returns to the concept of power as being subordinate to tradition, all efforts to return to full communion with the Eastern Church will be unlikely to make significant progress. N·V