

MICHAEL DAVIES' LITURGICAL SHIPWRECK

Rama P. Coomaraswamy, M.D.

'How art thou turned into bitterness, O stange vine.' How could that vine be true when one looked to it for grapes and it brought forth only thorns?"

St. Augustine

This small booklet, recently published by TAN is a masterpiece of subversive literature. Rarely has the art of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi* been practiced with such expertise. As the text is mercifully short, I shall start with page one.

Michael Davies informs us that "St. Pius V had codified the Mass that had developed gradually and naturally over almost a millennium and a half" and that he had wished it to remain unchanged in perpetuity. Now in point of fact the Mass in use during the sixteenth century in many parts of Christendom had added innumerable accretions and had become in many instances so cumbersome as to obscure its essential character. He therefore set up a commission to examine the Mass as it has been originally said - in order to restore it to as close to the form in which the early Church had said it. Prior to the time of Pope St. Damasus, due to the constant persecutions, documentation was sparse, but liturgical historians are clear that the Canon of the Roman Mass, with the exception of two short additions by Popes St. Gregory and St. Leo almost certainly goes back to the time of the Apostles. Nor is it strictly true that the Mass "developed" (he often speaks of its "evolution"!) over the course of time. True, St. Damasus determined the Gospel readings used in the traditional Mass in the fourth century (the New Testament having been "canonized" only in the year 317 - prior to this other readings were often used); true Pope St. Celestine introduced the Introit and Gradual in the Fifth Century (but what are these if not readings from the psalms appropriate to the season or the feast); true St. Gregory add the *Kyrie Eleison* and Pope St. Servius introduced the *Agnus Dei*, and that the prayer *Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christ custodiate...* at the time of giving communion was introduced at a time when the Real Presence was being denied. But these were additions and not deletions - additions that were both minimal and clarifying. They were not strictly speaking "developments," and certainly they do not justify the term "evolution," (both terms the author favors) for they changed absolutely nothing. And it is curious that Michael Davies assiduously avoids any mention of *Quo Primum* which not only guarantees our right of access to this Mass, but also anathematizes ("calls down the wrath of Almighty God") anyone who would deprive us of it. In this he follows the pattern of those who encourage us to write to Rome but at the same time tell us not to mention this important document which had the approval of every pope from Pius V to John XXIII. - but then, as everyone knows, writing to Rome to protest liturgical issues is an exercise in futility.

On page 2 Michael Davies fosters Cardinal Newman on us as "perhaps the greatest intellect of any Catholic in the history of the English speaking world." Newman was the most quoted theologian at Vatican II; he was an individual who strongly opposed the promulgation of the doctrine of infallibility of the pope and the ordinary Magisterium; he was an individual who fostered many modernist teachings - so much so that when Ward wrote his biography, he admits that he did everything he could to disguise these opinions; he was a man who was given no chair in the various commissions at Vatican I because he was strongly suspect of heresy; he was a man who was in fact accused of heresy by Cardinal Manning; he was a man who was blocked by the Irish bishops - and rightly so - because he wished to free university training in Ireland from the supervision of the theologians. Now all this is not to deny that Cardinal Newman submitted to the authority of the Church, and no judgment on his soul is intended. It is simply to say that he is an untrustworthy theologian - a man who when he was an Anglican was quite Catholic, and when he was a Catholic, quite Anglican. He unfortunately carried a great deal of Protestant baggage in his back when he entered the Church, and he must be read with caution. To give but one example, he argued that Christianity was true on the basis of probability which was a condemned proposition in the Syllabus of Pius IX. Aficionados of Newman would do well to study *Cardinal Newman in His Age* by Harold W. Weatherby.

On page 2 Michael Davies further informs us that the principle reason that Pius V codified the traditional Mass was for it to act as a rebuttal of Protestantism. Now while this may well be partly true, it should be recognized that the traditional Mass is far more than a polemic; it affirms the principle teachings of the Church that come to us from Christ and the Apostles, and at the same time is a rebuttal of all the major heresies. While it is true that Jean Guilton told us in 1993 that Paul VI's motivation was make the new Mass conform to the Calvinist sect, it was perfectly clear to any thinking person in 1969 that the New Mass was created to be acceptable to any and all Protestant sects.

On Page 3 Michael Davies assures that Paul VI was in no way unorthodox in his personal belief in the Eucharist because he vaguely confirms it in his *Credo of the People of God* and his encyclical *Mysterium Fidei*. What is clear however that nowhere in the Novus Ordo Missae, or in the General Instruction attached to it, is the Real Presence unequivocally affirmed. The definition of the Mass and the instruction that the supposed Words of Consecration be read as part of the "Institution Narrative" as if one were reading the Gospel Story - implicitly deny the Real Presence.¹ Now in the practical order almost no one reads Paul VI's Encyclicals (as if we ever need one on the *Credo of the People of God*). But post-

¹ Elsewhere Michael Davies suggests that one can take the new Mass in isolation and that one need not accept the General Instruction which provides the theological basis for the Novus Ordo Missae. This is of course but another example of his "picking and choosing."

Conciliar Catholics go to the Novus Ordo on a weekly basis where the Real Presence is implicitly denied. Which will have a greater effect on their souls?²

On page 4 he tells us what is necessary for the rite of the Mass. The essential elements are 1) the matter: bread and wine; 2 the form: "This is My body" and "This is the Chalice of my Blood..." 3) a validly ordained priest who 4) intends to do what the Church does in confecting this sacrament. The implication is that all this is present in the Novus Ordo Missae. It totally ignores the fact that the **form** of the rite has been changed, changed so as to alter its meaning. Nor does Michael Davies tell us at this point that the words of consecration were given to us *in specie* - precisely - by Our Lord, and that every valid Mass uses them unchanged. Paul VI, who has a character disorder that leads him to disobey his superiors (e.g. his dealing with Anglicans behind the back of Pius XII as Michael Davies points out) clearly disobeyed Our Lord in changing the words of Consecration. To quote him directly in the General Instruction: "We wish the words of our Lord (not the Words of Consecration mind you) to be." How can someone who knows the Words of Consecration used and specified by Our Lord, decide he wishes them to be something else? As for the criteria of a validly ordained priest, the reader is referred to my study on Holy Orders where it is clearly demonstrated that the Consecration of Bishops has been so altered as to almost certainly make Novus Ordo Bishops (which includes Ratzinger and Meyer) no more Bishops than Lutheran or Baptist "Bishops." Now, if the Bishop is not a Bishop, he cannot consecrate a priest.

Michael Davies makes much of the fact that the Second Vatican Council did not authorize the changes in the Mass - or at least, not all of them. In point of fact, it did allow for them by opening doors. But regardless of whether or not the Council authorized them, the fact remains that the Council had no authority until its documents were signed by the pope, and that changes in the Mass require on the part of the pope no authorization from anyone or any council. Paul VI stated that the documents of Vatican II are the "supreme form of the ordinary Magisterium" to which we were obliged to give our intellectual assent (the same thing as saying their teachings on faith and morals were true). This brings the documents, regardless of their being characterized as "pastoral" into the realm of *ex cathedra* teaching. Now, according to Pope Pius XI, the Mass is "the most important organ of the ordinary Magisterium." Following the principle that the *lex credendi* is reflected in the *lex orandi*, (our prayers reflect our beliefs) the explicit and implicit teachings of the liturgy must be accepted by Catholics as absolutely true. Changes in the liturgy by a legitimate pope carry the same authority as any council document. This point becomes important when Michael Davies tries to muddy the water by quoting von Hildebrand to the effect that all the ordinances of the Pope are not guaranteed the protection of the Holy Spirit - that the faithful are not obliged to regard all ordinances as good and desirable. Now clearly, there are ordinances and ordinances. Those relating to the Liturgy fall within the aegis of the ordinary Magisterium, which means to say that they are promulgated *ex cathedra*. A true pope is "one hierarchical person with our Lord," and hence, when he teaches *ex cathedra*; what he teaches is what Christ teaches. When he changes the liturgy, it is presumably Christ who is changing the liturgy. What I admire about Michael Davies is his courage. He holds that "a loyal Catholic has the right to express sincerely held reservations concerning certain aspects of the New Missal." He feels he has the wisdom to pick and choose what in the liturgy he thinks is good, and what is regrettable. In the fifty years that I have had the privilege of attending the traditional Mass, I have never thought to pick and choose which parts I like and don't like - the idea is totally foreign to me. How can one pick and choose from the ordinary Magisterium, and especially the liturgy, what one likes and dislikes? I am aware of the fact that Michael Davies believes the ordinary Magisterium can contain error, but that is simply not a Catholic teaching. One can argue about what is and what isn't in the ordinary Magisterium, but to say it can contain error is pure and simple heresy. It is equally offensive to pious ears to suggest that a true pope - again, one hierarchical person with our Lord - can promulgate a mass with poorly or ambiguously worded phrases. If I believed the post Conciliar popes were true popes, I would accept all their teachings and changes in the Mass "lock stock and barrel," without question.

Having set us up, Michael Davies proceeds to criticize the new liturgy. One remarkable quote which Davies gives us from Archbishop Gamber sets the stage and is worth highlighting:

"In the end we will all have to recognize that the new liturgical forms, well intentioned as they may have been in the beginning, did not provide the people with bread, but with stones."

The remainder of the book deals with evidence backing up this quote - the net effect being that in the United States attendance at the Novus Ordo service has dropped 65%. So much for renewal. At the same time Michael Davies is careful to intermittently remind us that stones or no, the Novus Ordo Missae is a Orthodox Catholic Mass. Here however he is once again forced to use tactics of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*. (As Davies says: "Please note that I am not claiming that the New Mass is unorthodox or that Pope Paul VI did not have the strict legal right to approve some changes in the Mass" - "some changes"?) Again, he assures us, that while it is rarely used, the Roman Canon was retained (or put back) by Paul VI, thanks to which "the New Mass cannot be described as a Protestant Liturgy." The implication is that the Roman Canon was preserved unchanged. Such is not the case, for words were both introduced and deleted in this Canon, allowing it to be interpreted in a Protestant sense - a little fact which Michael Davies carefully fails to inform his reader about.³ (The Lutherans and Anglicans have no problem using the new Roman Canon because it can be interpreted in a Protestant sense.) He also fails to mention that the Offertory has been all but deleted so that all that is offered is "the work of human hands," Again, he tells that "contrary to what is often alleged, Archbishop Lefebvre acknowledged that the New Mass is valid and contains no heresy." Now Archbishop Lefebvre said many things about the New Mass - and while he thought it could be *in se* (in itself, apart from the General Instruction, and perhaps in Latin) valid, he

² In point of fact, these two documents are perhaps the only documents promulgated by Paul VI which have some semblance of orthodoxy. Those who would like to investigate the errors contained within them are referred to J.S. Daly's *Michael Davies, An Evaluation*, published by Briton's Catholic Library.

³ The virtual destruction of the Offertory (all that is offered is "the work of human hands") makes it clear that at best the Novus Ordo is nothing more than "a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving".

also frequently expressed grave doubts about this validity. He further taught that attending it was a "danger to souls." Now how could someone who is "one hierarchical person with Our Lord" promulgate a rite that was a danger to souls? In any event, Lefebvre's orthodoxy is highly questionable. For example, he taught that one could disobey a Pope that one considered a true Pope; for another, he frequently assumed magisterial authority in rejecting some of the teachings of Vatican II.

Michael Davies lauds the use of the indult Mass without informing us that implicit in the indult is the total acceptance of both the *Novus Ordo Missae* and the documents of Vatican II. Initially, one had to go to the Bishops residence and sign such a statement. That is not enforced, but the requirement is nevertheless implicit. If you want the indult Mass (rare as it is), you must apostatize from the Catholic faith. Similarly, he praises the Society of St. Peter, many of the priests of which have been ordained by the "Orthodox?????" Cardinals Ratzinger and Meyer - both individuals consecrated to the Episcopal state by the new and almost certainly invalid rite. Priests who are not priests saying the quasi-traditional Mass (for they use the Indult Mass, and not the Tridentine Mass). What a mess of pottage we are being served by both the New Church and its apologist Michael Davies.

Michael Davies takes care to document the revolutionary nature of the *Novus Ordo Missae*. Revolution is of course a very significant term. Webster's defines it as "casting off of allegiance...to desert one's leader," and gives as an example "to change one's religion." To describe this rite as "revolutionary" is obviously to raise the question as to against whom or what are its proponents revolting - surely they are enlisting themselves under the banner of those who loudly proclaim *non serviam*. All this is applicable to the new Mass which is precisely why it is so "revolting."

He complains of the 400 mistranslations as if these are unknown to Rome - and as if Rome had not approved them or could not insist on their being changed. Who is kidding who? For example, it is well known that it was Paul VI who personally approved the mistranslation of *multis* by "all," certainly the most significant mistranslation of all, and considering the nature of the Church's constant teaching, a mistranslation with a clear heretical import.

Again, he tells us that John Paul II made a public apology in 1980 for the liturgical "abuses" which had become so widespread, though he admits that John Paul II seems to have forgotten this apology when he commemorated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Constitution on the Liturgy. Here and in what follows, he suggests that the real problem is the "abuses.. which have become institutionalized" and not the rite itself. One of these "abuses" is giving Communion in the hand. But has not John Paul II himself done this? And what of the abuse of allowing women to serve the *Novus Ordo* Mass? One could list a whole host of "abuses" that clearly have "papal" approval. The argument of "abuses" is of course a red herring. Cardinals Ottaviani and Bachi did not protest against the translations of the new mass, but against this false rite in its Latin version. (and the faithful would do well to read the entire criticism, and not just the letter that accompanied it as Davies suggests.) Abuses or not, it is the *Novus Ordo Missae* itself which traditional Catholics object to - and why, because it isn't Catholic. If John Paul II wanted to stop the "institutionalized" (what institution allows them?) abuses all he would have to say is "basta!"

One must in conclusion agree with Michael Davies that the new Mass is a liturgical shipwreck. That is the *raison d'être* for its creation. (One of the principle reasons it was created was ecumenism. And what after all is ecumenism but the denial of the one true faith?) And Michael Davies amply demonstrates, the fruits of this "revolution" are terrible. One is reminded of Luther's *Tolle Missam* - "destroy the Mass and you will destroy the Church." However, the author typically drops the football at the ten yard line (I used to say, at the first yard line, but he doesn't get that close these days.) The message is loud and clear - and equally subversive. The new mass is terrible, but we must accept it because it is promulgated by a valid pope. Now, one must admit that a liturgical rite promulgated by a valid pope is a valid rite. But the statement is a double-edged sword. If the liturgical rite promulgated isn't Catholic, if it is a rite that is "harmful to souls", if it is a "revolutionary" rite that bears deadly fruit and provides "stones" in place of "bread", than one must come to the conclusion that it was not promulgated by an individual who "is one hierarchical person with Our Lord." The post-Conciliar "popes" along with their rites stand or fall together.

Finally, let it be clear that this brief commentary is in no way meant to be an *ad hominem* attack on Michael Davies. What is of importance is Catholic doctrine and practice. When one presumes to write in the public forum on matters relating to the faith, one must be willing to defend oneself and one's orthodoxy. The only criteria that one can use to do this is to show that one is adhering to the constant teaching and practice of the Church. Personal opinions and individualities do not matter. One must anathematize those who believe it is more important to be one with the pope than to be one with Christ. As St. Catherine of Sienna said, a pope can go to hell and those that knowingly follow him in error can go to hell with him. If the post-Conciliar "popes" are not one hierarchical person with our Lord, then they are mere men (humanists at that) and cannot speak with any binding authority. We must serve God rather than man.

Rama P. Coomaraswamy, M.D.