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"But let your speech be, 'Yes, yes,' 'No, no'; and whatever is beyond these comes from the evil one. (Mt. 5:37)"

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Pius XII and "Paschal Mystery Theology"

In the *Dictionary of the Second Vatican Council* (Corpus Books, Washington, D.C., first edition, 1968) on the subject of the "Paschal Mystery," editors Fr. Adrien Nocent, O.S.B., and Jacques Deretz wrote:

It would be excessive to think that it might have been necessary to wait for Vatican II because, again, the term and the theology of the Paschal mystery was very much alive in the Church and was a part of the Church. However, it has to be recognized that such a rediscovery did not take too long to occur. The last and most important liturgical document prior to Vatican II, Pius XII's 1947 encyclical, *Mediator Dei*, did not as yet employ the term. It speaks of redemption and does not insist at all [*sic*] on Our Lord Jesus Christ's resurrection. It keeps to the viewpoint that posits the death of Jesus Christ [as] the central salvific event, and still does not emphasize that His Resurrection is *as much*, and *in an essential way* [emphasis added], the event of the world's salvation. Certainly, this does not at all mean that *Mediator Dei* ignores the Paschal mystery: on the contrary, all of the elements which comprise it are materially contained in this important Papal Magisterial document...But these elements' unification and synthesis is not perceived.

According to the editors of the *Dictionary of the Second Vatican Council*, the "unification and synthesis" would, instead, be carried out by the "Paschal Mystery theology" which is the rediscovery that "we Christians participate together with Our Pxisen Lord, Jesus Christ, in the Community that is the Church, in the Paschal mystery." The same theology has also "rediscovered how such a mystery comprises the Liturgy's center and its essential nucleus" (*ibid*).

The Problem of the Liturgical Reform

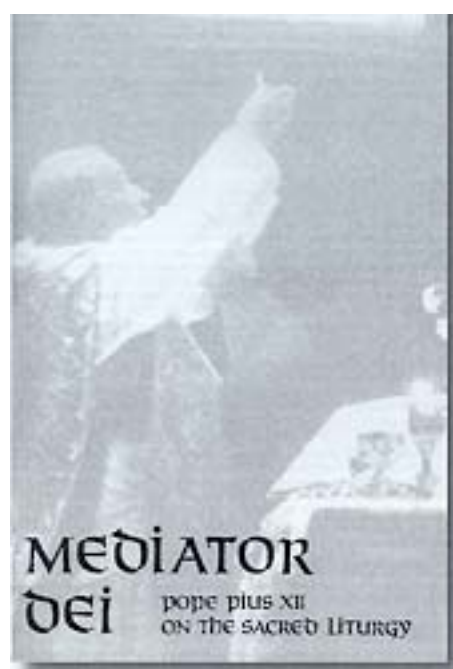
Do you sometimes wonder what is the best book to give to your *Novus Ordo* friends and relatives? Do you wonder which book might be the best to explain why we don't attend the New Mass? Well, here's your answer! His Excellency Bishop Bernard Fellay, Superior General of the Society of the Saint Pius X, recently sent a copy of this book to Pope John Paul II as part of the Society's talks with the Roman authorities. In France, 17,000 copies of this new and vital study have been sent to Catholic priests...and it has created quite a stir! This clear and concise book lays out a mass of quotations from the fabricators of the New Mass themselves to show how coherent, but un-Catholic, are the principles behind the *Novus Ordo Missae* (the New Order of Mass).

The book is in three parts: it shows, firstly, that the New Mass breaks the liturgical tradition of the Church; secondly, that this break proceeds from a new theology of basics such as sin and Redemption; thirdly, that this new theology is condemned by Catholic doctrine. **130pp, color softcover, HP Publication, STK# 6740. \$9.95**

Mediator Dei

On the Sacred Liturgy (Pius XII, 1947)

A reprimand to innovators. Nature of Liturgy, especially the Mass. Eucharistic worship. Divine Office and Liturgical Year. Pastoral directives. Includes Discussion Club Outline and suggested practices. **80pp, STK# 5307. \$2.50**



It seems to us that these assertions-which we must really call falsifications-are unfounded. In fact, if Pope Pius XII did not use the expression "Paschal Mystery" in *Mediator Dei*, it does not mean that he ignored it or didn't know anything about it. What really counts is that he points to "Paschal Mystery theology" among the Liturgical Movement's twisted deviations that he intended to correct with that encyclical.

What characterizes "Paschal Mystery theology"? Fr. Nocent says that it is the departure from "the viewpoint that posits the death of Jesus Christ [as] *the* salvific event [emphasis mine]," the viewpoint, by the way, maintained by Pope Pius XII. According to Nocent, this departure emphasizes "that His Resurrection is *as much*, and *in an essential way*, the event of the world's salvation." But Pope Pius XII was an excellent theologian in his own right, enough of one so that Cardinal Montini, the future Pope Paul VI, had warned Roger Schutz of the proto-ecumenical Taizé community about this, advising him to pose his questions to Pius XII on the "pastoral" level alone and not theologically. Neither as theologian nor pope did Pius XII allow himself any departure or exit from Tradition. It is the Church's perennial doctrine, defined by the Council of Trent on the basis of Sacred Scripture and Patristic Tradition, that:

Even though all Christ's individual activities have redemptive value for us, and as a whole compose the work of the Redemption, still His redemptive activity finds its apogee in the death of sacrifice on the Cross. On this account it is, by excellence but not exclusively, the efficient cause of our redemption.¹

Therefore, for Fr. Adrien Nocent to say that the resurrection of Jesus is "as much" the salvific event as His death, or to say even more strongly still that it is so "in an essential way" is to depart from the Church's traditional doctrine or, more precisely, to contradict it.

Jesus himself said that He came to "give his life a redemption for many" (Mt. 20:28) and to "shed his blood" in order to expiate the sins of men (Mt. 20: 28; Mk.10:45). At the Last Supper, He celebrated the Eucharistic sacrifice of His Body and Blood, poured out "for the remission of sins," with no mention of the Resurrection (Lk. 22:19; Mt. 26:28). To His disciples on the road to Emmaus, He said His Resurrection was the fruit of His Passion (Lk. 24:25,26). In fact, both the Old and New Testament equally attest that in God's plan, "Christ must vanquish death by means of death" and, by means of death merit resurrection for Himself and for the Mystical Body. Therefore,

His resurrection was *earned*, and not praiseworthy, nor could it have been because "with his death, Christ shut himself off from the praiseworthy level"² just as it will be closed for us by our death. If all of the meritorious actions of Christ's life culminate in the Passion and Death by which Christ merited salvation, His resurrection merited nothing but was the victorious *conclusion* of His redemptive work, the recompense for the Passion's humiliation, the prototype of our spiritual resurrection, as well as the pledge and token of our bodily resurrection. For this reason and no other, the resurrection of Christ belongs to the *integrity* of the Redemption. In fact, the Fathers of the Church speak of "merit" through the Passion and Death, and of "recompense" (*i.e.*, retribution; reward) through His Resurrection. Finally, the Council of Trent has defined infallibly that the "meritorious cause" of our salvation is Jesus Christ, which He merited "with His Most Holy Passion on the wood of the Cross" (*Dz* 799).

Thus, one can understand why Pope Pius XII in *Mediator Dei* "did not at all emphasize Our Lord Jesus Christ's resurrection," but concentrates on "the field of vision of Jesus Christ's death [as] the salvific event" and why we, too, keep to this same "field of vision."

But the new "Paschal Mystery theology" demands giving the Christ's resurrection at least "as much" salvific value as the death on the Cross and also the privilege arising from it. This "New Soteriology" *i.e.*, doctrine of salvation) is thick into the Liturgical Movement. Romano Guardini, one of its "fathers" and to whom Cardinal Ratzinger likes to refer, wrote in his *Il Signore* (pp.435-436): "Total clarity on the concept of redemption comes uniquely from the Resurrection."

Elsewhere he wrote:

If anyone asks: "What is redemption; what is it to have redeemed, and to have been redeemed?" the answer ought to be: "It is the Resurrection."

Thus, the Passion and the Death on the Cross are minimalized and annihilated in the glory of the Christ's Resurrection (although the risen hands and feet carry wounds and the heart is opened by a lance). Good Friday is eclipsed by Resurrection Sunday, the glorious *reward* being substituted for the sorrowful *meriting*. The "New Soteriology" hides from souls the understanding that no one conforms to the *Risen* Christ who does not will first to conform (and allow themselves to be conformed) to the *Crucified* Christ.

In *Mediator Dei*, Pius XII demonstrated he was not ignorant of this deviation, and clearly condemned it without naming the "Paschal Mystery theology" specifically. After recalling that the entire liturgical year requires us to make "an intense and efficacious effort" to imitate the mysteries of Christ, "in order to enter voluntarily the way of His sufferings and to participate finally in His glory and eternal blessing" (*Mediator Dei*), Pope Pius XII condemns those who attempt to separate the glorious goal of the Passion:

162. From what We have already explained, Venerable Brethren, it is perfectly clear how much modern writers are wanting in the genuine and true Liturgical spirit who, deceived by the illusion of a higher mysticism, dare to assert that attention should be paid not to the historic Christ but to a "pneumatic" [*i.e.*, "spiritualized" -*Ed.*] or glorified Christ. They do not hesitate to assert that a change has taken place in the piety of the faithful by dethroning, as it were, Christ from His position; since they say that the glorified Christ, who liveth and reigneth forever and sitteth at the right hand of the Father, has been overshadowed and in His place has been substituted that Christ who lived on earth. For this reason, some have gone so far as to want to remove from the churches images of the Divine Redeemer suffering on the cross.

163. But these false statements are completely opposed to the solid doctrine handed down by tradition. "You believe in Christ born in the flesh," says St. Augustine, "and you will come to Christ begotten of God." In the sacred liturgy, the whole Christ is proposed to us in all the circumstances of His life, as the Word of the Eternal Father, as born of the Virgin Mother of God, as He Who teaches us truth, heals the sick, consoles the afflicted, Who endures suffering and Who dies; finally, as He Who rose triumphantly from the dead and Who, reigning in the glory of heaven sends us the Holy Paraclete and Who abides in His Church forever". "Jesus Christ, yesterday and today; and the same forever." Besides, the Liturgy shows us Christ not only as a Model to be imitated but as a Master to Whom we should listen readily, a Shepherd Whom we should follow, Author of our salvation, the Source of our holiness and the Head of the Mystical Body whose members we are, living by His very life.

164. Since His bitter sufferings constitute the principal mystery of our Redemption it is only fitting that the Catholic faith should give it the greatest prominence. This mystery is the very center of divine worship since the Mass represents and renews it every day and since all the Sacraments are most closely united with the Cross [(emphasis mine) ed. Mary Immaculate Queen Ctr., pp.56,57].

As is evident from the above quotations, Pius XII did not separate the Resurrection from the Passion, just as the Church has never separated it, and, as the Church has always done, he also emphasizes the Passion's privileged place and did not place it on equal footing with the ends of salvation: "...His bitter sufferings constitute the principal mystery of our Redemption—" The provision for our salvation is His death on the Cross and, consequently, the Sacrifice of the Cross-and *not* the Resurrection-is "the very center of divine worship," as the Church has always taught.

However, in the "Paschal Mystery theology," there is a *theological* inversion, logically followed by a *liturgical* inversion. Says Fr. Adrien Nocent: "[T]he center, the essential nucleus of the liturgy," is no longer the Sacrifice of the Cross, but the "Paschal Mystery" that is, the Resurrection.

Cardinals Ottaviani and Bacci pointed out the descent of the *Novus Ordo Missae* toward the "Paschal Mystery theology" when, in their *Short Critical Study of the New Order of Mass* [a.k.a. *The Ottaviani Intervention-Ed.*] presented to Pope Paul VI on Pentecost, 1969, they noted that the definition of the Mass was rendered inaccurate:

It is obvious that the *Novus Ordo* obsessively emphasizes "supper" and "memorial," instead of the unbloody renewal of the Sacrifice of the Cross.

Even the phrase in the Instruction describing the Mass as a "memorial of the Passion *and* Resurrection" is inexact [emphasis in original]. The Mass is the memorial of the unique Sacrifice, redemptive in itself; whereas, the Resurrection is the fruit *which follows* from that sacrifice [emphasis in original]. We shall see later how such equivocations are repeated and reiterated both in the formula for the Consecration and throughout the *Novus Ordo* as a whole [*The Ottaviani Intervention*, ed. TAN Books and Publishers, pp.35,36].

In exalting the Resurrection, which pervades today's liturgy (even though the "New Theology" negates Christ's bodily Resurrection), there might be more than an inexactitude. Practically speaking, this is a recycling of the 38th modernist thesis *condemned* by Pope Pius X in his decree, *Lamentabili Sane* [a.k.a. *Syllabus Condemning the Errors of the Modernists*], that is: "The doctrine of the expiatory death of Christ is Pauline and not evangelical." This is to say that the Catholic Church condemns the idea that Christ's salvific Passion and Death is a *fabrication* of St. Paul and *not* of the "true Gospel."

The extremist emphasis on the Resurrection, and the creeping heretical negation of Christ's expiatory sacrifice which results, strikes not only the Catholic doctrine of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, but all Christianity. It is diabolical.

Ermengildus

This article was translated by Suzanne Rini from the original Italian (*Si/SiNo/No*, April 30, 2002) exclusively for *The Angelus*. It was edited for clarity and partially added to for interest by Fr. Kenneth Novak.

1. Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, (Rockford, IL: TAN Books and Publishers, 1974), p.185.

2. See Tito Denti, O.P., note 2, p.281 of vol. XXVI of *La Somma Teologica*, edited by the Italian Dominicans, published by Salani.

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