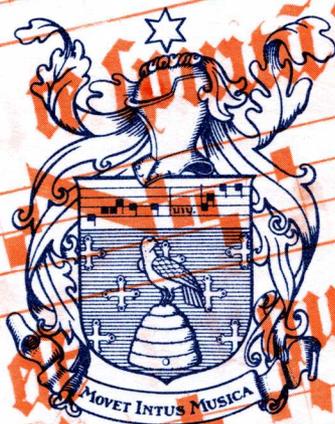


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Studies in Sacred Chant and Liturgy

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Bulletin of the School of Solesmes

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December 11, 1956

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BY WAY OF EDITORIAL

This is the season of open doors. We do not refer to the kind that is intended to ward off the inclemencies of winter, although for some of our readers, the season may seem appropriate enough. Our reference here, however, is to the figurative division of 1956 from 1957. In the course of the next few weeks, all kinds of articles, speeches and toasts will be written about all kinds of things, and glorious accounts of the past will be linked with warm predictions of the future. Church musicians are not above seasonal trends, and we can divert the annual process to our own ends.

Many things can change in a year, and many do. Then, too, there are subtler processes of clarifying issues and varying shifts of emphasis. In the realm of church music such changes are constantly taking place. Organizations come and go; movements are begun or allowed to die; efforts are put forth for this or that objective.

We think, speaking for the English-language areas of the world, that we are justified in saying that liturgical ideals are permanently established, and that Gregorian chant, as the saying goes, is "here to stay". In spite of contrary currents and different kinds of obstacles, there is hardly a diocese which does not now at least recognize the worth of the liturgical restoration and of the use of Gregorian chant. In some dioceses there are practically no churches in which respect for the chant and liturgical ideals is not evident. This is a good thing, and worth considering, even though it is not an achievement of the last year or any other single year.

The Solesmes method has, of course, had a great deal to do with the establishing of chant in the average parish. Here and there there have been dissenters, but, in general, the average choir loft is stocked with Solesmes editions and follows, more or less, the principles of the Solesmes school.

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Recently other movements, contrary or at tangents to the Solesmes principles, have been inaugurated. We feel obliged to say a word here in regard to these, as their significance is considerable in the future growth of the liturgical ideal. They represent one of the figurative open doors noted above which might turn out, if unwisely handled, to lead to blind alleys.

The English-speaking parts of the world have always lagged behind the French in their grasp of the history, paleography and restoration of the chant. This is understandable, as most of the early spade-work was done by French scholars and published in French magazines and as French books. Today most of the best manuscript sources are in Italy and France (except for certain collections such as those of St. Gall), and at Solesmes there are maintained first-class reproductions and catalogues of available manuscripts from other countries. Work on the chant moves forward more readily in France, and new points of view and new discoveries are more common to French scholars.

What does all this mean for readers of this *Review*? Primarily it is a warning against facile generalizations in favor of this or that new theory or energetic movement originating with individuals or isolated organizations which have not had the opportunity of working closely with the great mass of accumulated knowledge of the chant. Such movements have appeared sporadically and with inconsistent degrees of success from time to time in the history of the restoration of chant. In nearly every instance—and this is the important point—these movements have arisen from a dangerously small dose of knowledge about the chant.

We have all had the occasion to observe misunderstandings and errors in the study of the Solesmes method. We are only beginning to overcome these well-meaning misconceptions through our teaching. We now are faced with a more complex misunderstanding.

In the past many church musicians have accepted the Solesmes method as the only possible one, because of sheer

ignorance that any other approach could exist. Perhaps this was dangerous and responsible for present errors, but there were few opportunities for confusion under that viewpoint. Today a growth in understanding of the whole subject of restoring the chant has produced a deeper interest among church musicians in the actual process of restoration and the basis of the Solesmes principles. The training of English-speaking people being what it is, this deeper interest has produced its share of skeptics. Many musicians, realizing for the first time that the Solesmes rhythmic signs are *supplementary* to the simple, unmarked Vatican edition, have taken the attitude that there is something superfluous in their use. Some of these persons, particularly those whose training is descended from either the old Ratisbon school or the "free individualism" of those who use the unmarked Vatican edition, have tried to make it fashionable to oppose the Solesmes method as pedantic or overly "fussy" about minor details. The result in choirlofts where these viewpoints have been allowed to express themselves in actual singing has been varied and inconsistent.

Sometimes a very fine musician may, for some reason or other, apply his personal "method" or lack of method to choir singing in a certain seminary, monastery or parish. He sometimes secures, through his own musicality, a beautiful result, differing somewhat from the Solesmes tradition. These occasional successes are often cited by opponents of the Solesmes method as "proof" that "free interpretation" is valid. It is very important for us all to note, however, that this type of independent teaching rarely reproduces itself. A method based on the gifts and musicianship of an outstanding individual cannot be transmitted to others except through a real "method". Dom Mocquereau knew this, and for this reason the Solesmes method is at its present stage of organization and consistency. Those who choose to ignore this principle are opening the door to floundering and confusion, eventually resulting in discouragement.

What we are really saying is this: an approach to chant singing cannot be based on negation. It must be founded on

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positive principles which are as valid for the average musician as for the highly gifted. In considering the contemporary scene, we must add that music in many parishes and many communities is under the direction of persons who have had less than a desirable amount of training, and sometimes, of persons who have less natural endowment for musical leadership than might be sought after. Those of us who are responsible for the teaching of chant to persons of average intelligence and musical bent must realize that an appeal to inner musical feeling is by no means enough as a "method". Describable principles and procedures which cover all cases must be provided, just as they are provided in every other field of musical theory.

We have noted in the past year that many doors have been opened, ending on one hand a certain phase of development and inaugurating on the other certain new phases. Among these is an announced revival in the United States of the so-called Caecilian movement. This very name will elicit reactions of varying types among those who read it. In purpose the new movement is not noticeably different from its European predecessor. We may hope, however, that it will be marked by insight and perspective not enjoyed by the original movement. We may hope that compositions promoted by the new movement will rise above the sterile "correctness" of the old school, and that chant will be given consideration in the light of the basic principles of Solesmes, namely the respect of medieval tradition and a regard for practical demands of the average choir. We extend our sincere good wishes to the musicians who espouse the noble aims of the new movement, with the simple admonition that they bear in mind their deep responsibilities in influencing persons who will look to them for guidance.

Understanding of the Church's own music, Gregorian chant, does not stand still. For many years, those who are trained in the intricacies of the restoration of this music have known that the Vatican edition, a wonderful product of good minds in the years of its compilation, is full of melodic errors, to be corrected in some future edition. Those who have the

advantages of such training also know that the Vatican edition is lacking in certain indisputable rhythmic marks which are found in the manuscripts. Therefore while musicians everywhere are busy in opening the doors we have referred to, Solesmes, in the manner typical of the Church itself, is quietly engaged in opening its own doors to a continuing improvement of chant and its use in the singing Church. At this moment research is going forward on a special critical edition of the Graduale, noting things which may need correction in the Vatican edition, and supplying the sources for clarification of future editions. Publication of the results of this study will undoubtedly remove many points of disagreement from any further argument and reduce many of the currently divergent "methods" to the role of historical curiosities.

In the light of the above remarks, we cannot but emphasize the need for all Solesmes adherents to maintain their techniques and their contacts with authoritative sources. Solesmes itself has always gained its greatest victories through actual singing in the style which it has made famous. We must all bear in mind that it is our obligation to sing the liturgy as beautifully as possible, and that no detail or fine point is too small for consideration in this regard. The Solesmes method is undoubtedly the most famous and widespread today, and this is not without excellent reason. It has served Holy Mother the Church in all the ways necessary: it looks to tradition as its model; it is consistently beautiful when properly sung; it is based on a clear and positive method which, in the final analysis, can produce good results anywhere.

We of the staff of the Gregorian Review extend to all our readers our sincere wishes for a happy and spiritually fruitful Christmas and a rewarding New Year.

THE INTERNATIONAL LITURGICAL CONGRESS

(Assisi-Rome, September 18 to 22, 1956)

by Dom Jean Claire, O.S.B.
Editor-in-chief, La Revue Gregorienne

The regular news services have no doubt informed our readers of the general scope of the First International Congress of Liturgical Pastoral, which was held at Assisi from the 18th to 22nd of September of this year, and which was closed at Rome by the important address which the Holy Father delivered on the occasion of the special audience granted to the delegates. Those who took part in the activities included five cardinals, among them the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, assisted by several of his closest collaborators, sixty or so bishops and abbots, thirteen hundred priests and monastics, a few nuns and a small number of laymen.¹

The Congress was certainly a great success as regards the number of participants and the organization of the many and complicated aspects of it. The entire credit goes to the leading roles taken by the various national centers (*Centro di Azione liturgica d'Italie, Centre de Pastorale Liturgique de Paris, Liturgischen Instituts von Treves, Centro di Liturgia Pastorale de Lugano*), under the direction of the very distinguished President of the Italian Center, His Excellency Carlo Rossi, Bishop of Biella.

Let us say immediately that the personal contacts which we are happy to have established in the course of the Congress were cordial. There are diverse opinions represented, to be sure, sometimes contradictory ones, but the relationship from one person to another was sincere and really fraternal.

1. The Gregorian Institute of America was officially represented by the Editor-in-chief of the *Revue Gregorienne* who prepared this report.

We returned from Assisi with a conviction that there is no really insoluble "personal difference" between liturgists.

Authority Presides and Speaks

Yet our readers do not expect anecdotes of us (although we could give some extraordinary ones) in regard to the Congress, but a commentary on the proposals and positions put forward and the echo of reactions which these proposals provoked.

But first, why the title "First International Congress" . . . Was not the Congress of Assisi a continuation of earlier international meetings at Maria-Laach (1951), Sainte-Odile (1952), and Lugano (1953)? Yes, of course, for it has been the same group of organizers who have taken the initiative in the matter. The new element at Assisi, however, which allowed this Congress to consider itself the first of a new series, was not the mere shading of the title, in which the term "pastoral" appeared for the first time, but rather in official and public intervention of the Holy See. Whereas, for example, at Lugano the Congregation of Rites was represented only by "observers," at Assisi the Cardinal-Prefect presided in person, and when he gave the opening address, about which we shall say more later, who could doubt that he spoke not only with complete awareness of his deep responsibilities but most of all with full authority as vested in him by the high office which he occupies? Moreover, the Congress closed at Rome with an address of the Holy Father. We should not lose sight of the fact that, in spite of the way in which Pius XII speaks to all groups of people from all walks of life with that pertinence of terminology and accuracy of conclusion so admired by the whole world, when the Sovereign Pontiff gives doctrinal teaching on points touching dogma and the liturgy which he "holds closest to his heart" (in his own words), he then exercises openly his role as Pastor and Doctor, and that his words are an authentic expression of the official teaching of the Church.

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There was active and vigilant presence, then, of the supreme Authority in liturgical matters: the Sovereign Pontiff and the Cardinal-Prefect of the Congregation of Rites, and this was certainly the dominant characteristic of this first International Congress. That there were some divergencies of opinion between this Authority, which took charge for the first time of the doctrinal direction of the activities of a liturgical Congress, and certain delegates, more used to the frank and uncontrolled expression of preceding meetings, should not be too surprising. These are the nearly inevitable frictions which accompany most changes in direction.

Without trying to give any detailed analysis here regarding all the reports presented to the Congress (we shall have plenty of time to touch on the more interesting ones), we shall nevertheless sketch the general lines of the main activities. Let us begin, as is proper, with the unquestionably most solid and durable part, the doctrinal points studied by the Holy Father and the Cardinal-Prefect.

In his opening speech, Cardinal Cicognani spoke at length of the work of liturgical reform of the Pontificate of Pius XII, thus leading to the lectures which were to carry on this theme in the days to follow. Then he stressed with remarkable energy two questions which, although not explicitly given as part of the program of the Congress, nevertheless were particularly suited to the order of the day: (1) the misunderstood value of the Mass celebrated without attendance of the faithful, and (2) the high value which the Church sees as connected with the maintaining of Latin as the liturgical language. In his closing speech, the Holy Father returned to these points, more to the former, more briefly to the latter, but in terms which left nothing more to be said.

Celebration and Concelebration

We have known already, since the pontifical speech of November 2, 1954, that certain liturgical congresses, national and international, were the occasion of so-called "community masses": A single priest says the mass, and the other

priests (in whole or for the most part) attend this single mass and receive communion from the hand of the celebrant. It was thus at Lugano (International Congress) in 1953, at Munich (National Congress) in 1955, but not at the annual congresses of the *Centre de Pastorale Liturgique* at Versailles, where a serious effort of organization was made to allow all the priests to celebrate mass every day. Pius XII had at that time, moreover, stated the conditions under which this community practice might be authorized by the Ordinary of the diocese: in addition to there being a just and reasonable reason for the practice, it would be necessary that all danger of scandalizing the faithful be avoided, and in particular that this practice should not arise from a doctrinal error concerned with the value of private masses and the nature of the priesthood. A number of indications would make us think that at Assisi the intention was to make the daily pontifical mass just such a "community mass." Now the Holy See considered that the conditions which would have justified this usage were not fulfilled.

1. Each priest as an individual might certainly have personal reasons, perfectly just and reasonable, for not celebrating mass, but it is not possible to imagine that out of over a thousand priests present it would be possible to find enough personal reasons to justify three successive days of total abstention from celebration of the mass. The only just and reasonable cause for a collective abstention would have been the material impossibility of finding enough altars so that this celebration could take place within a reasonable time. Now at Assisi this reason was less valid than elsewhere, providing adequate dispositions were taken in advance.

2. The "miratio populi" becomes greater day by day regarding the disaffection of certain priests for the celebration of the mass and their strange tendency to reduce themselves thus to the "lay communion." An eminent French prelate told us of the scandal which was raised at Lourdes

1. Let us mention only one reason, which seems decisive to us. The daily schedule placed breakfast at after ten o'clock, after the high mass.

by the intentional abstention of such priests, who had nevertheless come in pilgrimage. They could not all plead the excuse of not having the time or place necessary for a worthy celebration.

3. Finally, the theological error on the value of private masses and the nature of the priesthood did not seem, unfortunately, to be completely absent! In our times this error has found supporters even among theologians of reknown, and many conversations manifestly proved to us that these ideas, imprudently promoted by a section of the liturgical press, have boldly made a way for themselves. At the roots of this disregard for the private mass is a perversion in practice of the notion of the liturgy, an unbalance in the concept of the Christian cult. It is not admitted, or at least no time is given to considering, that the liturgy is *primarily* for God and for the manifestation of His glory. Instead, the *utility* of the liturgy is stressed (which is quite real, of course) as regards mankind. It is forgotten oftentimes that *the liturgy*, as the Holy Father reminds us so opportunely, *does not exhaust the field of activity of the Church, particularly in regard to its tasks of teaching and pastoral guidance.*

The liturgy of the mass, the Holy Father then had to say, *has as its goal the perceptible expression of the grandeur of the mystery which is accomplished, and present efforts tend to lead the faithful to participate in it in as active and intelligent a way as possible. Although this objective is justified, a lowering of respect is risked, if attention is drawn from the principal action in order to direct it toward the brilliance of other ceremonies.* Indeed, too often the mass is presented like a Protestant sermon interspersed with hymns and provided with four processions, or again, as a brotherly feast with toasts by the president. It is clear that in this light the absence of the congregation makes it useless to read the Holy Scriptures aloud in the empty room, even as it makes processions impossible, the family table empty, and the monologue of a president without listeners pointless. Since the mass was for the congregation, without a congregation, there is no mass. *I do not celebrate*, we heard one person explain,

because my community is not with me . . .

In two words the Holy Father restored things to the proper point by bringing the mass back to the essential matter: *Actio Christi*, and in that way, the action of the whole Church which is united to Him. The mass is the exercise of the Priesthood of Christ through the ministries of the celebrating priest, *personam Christi gerens*. The rest of the aspects of the mass have value only through this, and if all exterior link between the priest and his people disappears, the *Actio Christi* still retains its entire value; it remains a real action of the whole Mystical Body, and its benefits may even be attained by those faithful who are legitimately absent, always represented, moreover, in a visible manner by the indispensable servant . . . The Pope says clearly: *Even if the consecration takes place without much ceremony and in complete simplicity, it is the central point of the whole liturgy and sacrifice . . . When the consecration of the bread and wine takes place validly, the action of Christ himself is accomplished. Even if what should follow cannot be completed, nothing essential will be lacking from the offering of the Lord.* These truths may seem very elementary to some. Yet the Holy Father has deemed it indispensable to recall them, not before an untrained congregation, but before a congress of specialists.

Such being the situation, the Congress for three days enjoyed the rite of the "papal Chapel," that is, a pontifical mass sung by a cardinal at the papal altar of the patriarchal Basilica of St. Francis, the ceremonies taking place, moreover, as though the Pope were present on the throne.

Per benignam concessionem SS. Domini Nostri Pii Divina Providentia Papae XII, said the rubric at the head of the official program of the Congress, *habebitur "Capella Papalis."*

In supradicta Capella Papali, Communio non distribuitur.

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Nothing remained but the celebration of mass in private (which certain priests had determined on in advance,¹ even were there to be a "community mass") or to communicate at the private mass of a confrere, afterwards to sulk about the papal Chapel, called disparagingly by some the place of the "conventual mass."

One solution which would have answered all the problems at once would have consisted of what the Holy Father was to have called a "true concelebration," all the priests present effectively pronouncing the formula of consecration with the principal Celebrant . . . But without going into the practical problems of introducing this rite with such a great number of concelebrants, it was evident that the doctrinal errors in vogue on this question, the open resistance noted by the Holy Father himself, that the backers of the pretended "non-formulated concelebration" had not ceased to oppose to the wise suggestions of the pontifical address of November 2, 1954, as well as the regrettable initiatives taken in this delicate matter in certain communities of priests, made it impossible for the Holy See to grant such a measure, so laudable in itself. This is a fine example of a useful and interesting reform, obstructed by a wrong and culpable independence of thought and action, which serves to show that nothing is gained by trying to go too quickly in these matters, or too far.

The Liturgical Language

The second question taken up by the Cardinal-Prefect and repeated by the Holy Father, was that of the use of Latin. The Cardinal was very clear. He did not take up, of course, the concessions already made, the more recent of

1. This did not represent the majority, however, according to the statistics, and we cannot say that there were many facilities for saying mass thus; therefore the Secretariate of the Congress, no doubt caught short, was able to provide for some forty priests (including a cardinal and six abbots or bishops) housed with the Benedictines of St. Joseph, in all and for all, only four altars.

Among the reasons for abstention en masse at the papal Chapel (particularly the final two days) we should add the very real physical fatigue during these very busy and unusually warm days. The small number of seats had obliged many priests to remain standing during the whole ceremony the first day.

which were signed in his own hand, but speaking to the priests and recalling the teaching of the recent encyclicals, he gave a eulogy on the liturgical language, guardian of the integrity of doctrine and manifest sign of unity. Obviously a good part of his listeners were not accustomed to such an approach, which is not, however, surprising for those who keep themselves informed of the mind of the Church, expressed regularly in public documents. Moreover, during the two days which followed, this incomprehension was emphasized by periods of repeated and determined applause which interminably greeted the least illusion—even the most insignificant—to the use of the vernacular. These were upsetting moments, to be sure, and painful ones for those who still believe that the Catholic liturgy is, according to the classical adage, a school of obedience and supernatural respect. If for many, and we would like to believe that it was for the most part, these manifestations, in spite of their awkward character, meant only to present the present Authority with a simple request provoked by an immediate and visible pastoral concern (perhaps forgetful of a more profound and universal influence achieved on the immediately unobservable plane of grace), for others who spoke more openly in terms astonishing to say the least, the manifestations would easily have taken the cast of a campaign intended to seize the greatest concessions possible, at any cost. For this latter group, it was obvious that the already granted concessions for the Ritual, biblical readings and, in certain countries, for some of the chants, were only a temporary step, and that the end to be gained by the campaign of opinion then in course was to obtain the liturgy integrally and directly in the vernacular.

The atmosphere did not become clear to some extent until the evening of the second day, when Canon Martimort, Director of the Centre de Pastorale Liturgique de Paris, moderator of the sessions of the Congress, gave a calming declaration, explaining what the meaning of the applause

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of the auditors could and ought to be and asking them to observe a wise moderation.

The conclusions of the Holy Father left no room for ambiguity. *For the Church's part, he declared, the present liturgy includes a concern for progress, but also for conservation and defense.*

Then, to develop each of these aspects:

Progress: *The Church . . . returns to the past, without copying it servilely, and creates anew in the ceremonies themselves, in the use of the vernacular, in the chant of the people and in the construction of churches.*

Conservation and defense: *It would be, however, superfluous to recall once again that the Church has serious motives for maintaining firmly in the Latin rite the unconditional obligation for the celebrating priest to use the Latin language, and in the same way, when Gregorian chant accompanies the Holy Sacrifice, that this be done in the language of the Church.*

Thus the Pope confirms the recent concessions regarding the use of the vernacular and the place acknowledged for singing of the people in the Encyclical *Musicae sacrae disciplina* (considered by him as one of the three great liturgical documents of his pontificate), a place clearly marked as outside the solemn liturgy. At the same time, however, he gives the precise limits of this movement. In full hypothesis, the celebrant will continue to speak in the name of the Church in the language of the Church, and the Gregorian melodies, which are the official music of the Church, will not be adapted to vernacular texts for which they were not written. These are simple reminders, which show, however, that the Church is not disposed to let itself be carried away, and that there will be danger in committing the future to a course which the Church in no way approves.

Such are the two points of interest on which the Congress of Assisi reached a somewhat positive and durable result, because they were treated by the sole Authority which can settle a debate in this subject:

1. A reminder of the principles involved in the subject of the theology of the mass, with a clarification of the value of private masses and definition of true concelebration,

1. A reminder of the limits beyond which the Church does not wish to become involved in the question of using the vernacular, and measures of protection already taken to safeguard the purity of Gregorian chant, and through it, the integrity of the solemn liturgy.

We should, however, add the other subject brought up by the Holy Father in his very fine address: the liturgy, vital function of the entire Church; method of collaboration of the hierarchy and the faithful in the liturgy; the teaching and pastoral theology of the Church act also outside the liturgy; directives for a better understanding of the cult of the Blessed sacrament; advantages for the liturgical spirit in a meditation on the *Infinita et divina majestas Christi*.

The Liturgical Works of the Pontificate of Pius XII

It remains for us to summarize the reports of the various lecturers, an impressive panorama of the liturgical work of the Pontificate of Pius XII; we shall present first of all those which directly illustrated the three aspects which, according to the Holy Father himself, characterize the intentions of this Pontificate: progress, conservation and defense. These works form by themselves a magnificent ensemble, perfectly unified in itself.

A special mention should go to the theological paper of the Rt. Rev. Dom Capelle, Abbot of M o n t - C e s a r of Louvain, Belgium, which illuminated the doctrine of the encyclicals *Mystici Corporis* and *Mediator Dei*, showing how the

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notion of the Church as defined in the former document was applied in the latter to a study of the liturgy, "integral cult of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, Head and members" so well that the result is that the various errors on the nature of the Church entail inextricable problems in the liturgical domain. It seems obvious to us indeed that those who, for example, are tempted to oppose the factors of obedience and charity in the liturgy, the observation of law and the good of souls, subscribe at least implicitly to the Protestant distinction between the "law-giving Church" and the "Church of charity", a pernicious error many times denounced by Pius XII because of the serious consequences it brings about in other areas as well as that of the liturgy. With all the authority which is given him by his long service to the contemporary liturgical movement, the Abbot of Mont-Cesar warned the younger generation against a type of mental outlook which is, alas, too common in our times; he warned them not to believe too readily that the Church is slow to see, or that the Church is ignorant, or that the Church cannot or will not act. He further directed them away from these dangerous ideas and the resulting search for a pretext to support innovations contrary to the very nature of the liturgy, which remains "the integral cult of the Mystical Body" only because it is formed and regulated by the Hierarchy. No doubt these declarations, supported by a reading of the most characteristic passages of the *Mediator Dei* were not aimed at obtaining a show of noisy and spectacular enthusiasm. The attitude of the prelates who presided over the activities of the Congress, as well as the closing address of the Sovereign Pontiff must, however, at least have given Dom Capelle the enviable satisfaction of noting that the Church's opinion in no way differed from his.

To this masterly paper, we must add that of Father Bea, S.J., on the *Pastoral Value of the Word of God in the Liturgy*, of depth and balance which left nothing to be desired. The former rector of the Biblical Institute explained the special value given to liturgical proclamation of Scripture because of its close connection with the Holy Sacrifice, and

from this concluded with the pastoral importance of authentically biblical preaching.

The riches preserved by the Eastern Church, the proximity of apostolic remains, the sense of mysticism in general and Easter mysticism in particular, all were very well explained by Dom Olivier Rousseau of the Priory of Chevetogne. We might be somewhat reserved, however, in the measure of the real advantages of a multiplicity of national liturgies to the basic Catholic unity.

Beginning with the address of Cardinal Gerlier was a series of studies which were to follow, step by step, the principal liturgical reforms of Pius XII. The question of bilingual rituals was first studied in its historic development which showed the traditional aspect of the use of the vernacular in the teaching of the sacraments, as in general in personal contact of the Church with individuals (the marriage vows, for example, have always and everywhere been asked and answered in the vernacular), whereas the Church still maintains without exception the use of Latin for everything that is concerned with the form of the sacraments used by the priest. The Cardinal then turned to the various national rituals conceded by the Holy See, analyzing and comparing their respective make-up, expressing the wish, in passing—and the case is not far-fetched—that no Catholic should ever be obliged, at the time of receiving the sacraments, to hear or use a national language which does not suit him. Finally he quite correctly emphasized the absolute necessity of maintaining the Latin text in all the liturgical books next to the translation. While thanking the Holy Father for more and more generous means accorded in this domain, the Archbishop of Lyon was nevertheless careful to warn pastors neither to think themselves dispensed by the use of these translations of the need for the teaching irreplaceable, in every sense, emphasized by the Council of Trent as vital for the fruitful reception of the sacraments by the faithful, nor dispensed of the need to read and frequently meditate on the Roman Ritual, from which the bilingual rituals are merely extracted.

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On the pastoral advantages of the evening mass and the relaxation of the laws of the Eucharistic fast, Bishop Garonne, Archbishop-coadjutor of Toulouse, gave a report which aroused the admiration of all. He strove to show the maternal wisdom of the Church and her prudence in these reforms, and with fine tact, he used these explanations to suggest certain simplifications in present canonic legislation on these points.

Then the Most Reverend Father Antonelli, Relator-general of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, spoke of the reform of Holy Week, the first step in the road to general reform, of the extremely encouraging results which had been obtained in all the nations of the world, and he expressed to the Congress the gist of certain wishes expressed by the bishops to the Sacred Congregation to bring the liturgical program of those holy days into clear focus.

It fell to Cardinal Lecaro, Archbishop of Bologna, to speak last of the simplification of the rubrics, the first step in a reform of the Breviary. He did this with that spirit, sometimes touched with humor, which makes all his listeners his friends. He showed first that there was no reason to be scandalized by recent simplifications and the abridgements which they brought about. Then he discussed the possibilities, more or less impending, of good modifications in order to obtain a better adaptation of the Roman Breviary to the conditions of life of the secular clergy. We can merely touch upon the main points covered:

1. Revision of the calendar and transfer of certain feasts of saints in order to leave the liturgical seasons (notably Lent) their full meaning;
2. Division of the Psalter—which remains, obviously, the basis of the Divine Office—over more than a week, a change which, by reducing Matins, would make it possible to use the same psalms each day at Compline and during the Little Hours, just as is done in the Monastic Breviary. This would make it possible to

learn the Office by heart, and relate it clearly to the proper "hour" of the day.

3. Distinction between choral recitation, in common, and individual recitation, in which certain specifically choral elements can be optional (as is already the case for the double *Confiteor* and Martyrologium).

4. At the night Office, a revision of the Lectionary, as much biblical as patristic. As for the Legend, the Cardinal noted carefully that after a critical and hypercritical phase, we seem today to be swinging to a *status quo*. In any case, the lightening of Matins ought to leave priests the time for a meditation in intimate relation to the liturgical texts read in the Breviary, particularly with the patristic homelies given in more ample and more complete pericopes.

5. For the instruction of the faithful invited to attend parish Vespers, the chapter of this Hour can be replaced by a longer reading from Scripture, if necessary in the vernacular, which seems normal enough to us;

6. Return to the ancient and authentic version of the Hymns, since the correctors of Urban VIII did not achieve anything better than pedantry and obscurity.

7. Restoration to honor of the *Pater*, the Christian prayer *par excellence*, at the focal center of each Hour, as in the Monastic Breviary.

8. Finally, "in a Marian century which ours fortunately is", the Cardinal said, it would seem to be fitting that we maintain in the Breviary the Marian antiphon of the time, at least twice per day: in the evening at Compline, as is now the case, and in the morning, perhaps at Lauds.

After this group of lectures which form a magnificent homage to the liturgical accomplishments of Pius XII, we should mention certain other matters, which, although not

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wholly without merit, it seems to us, at least in certain passages, diverged somewhat from the general theme which the Cardinal-Prefect had intended to set for the Congress through his inaugural speech.

Thus Father Jungmann seemed to us to be richly erudite and very well-informed, but a little bit out of the path when, for reasons of his subject (*The Pastoral, Key to Liturgical History*), he declared that in the great centuries of the Church the liturgy was sufficient for all, and that instruction added to the very texts of the liturgy was then nearly unknown, or at least very minor in scope, for at that time, only the Bishop spoke. We were happy to hear Father Roguet, Director of the *Centre de Pastorale Liturgique* express a different opinion (in a fine little paper, perfect in tone and contents, on *Preaching and the Liturgy*), citing the immense work of St. Augustine, prince of liturgical pastoral. Certainly the homelies given by the Bishop were very well suited to be inserted into the liturgy, but it is quite a different thing from a simple reading determined in advance by the liturgical books. We cannot, moreover, accept without very strong reservations the surprising parallel drawn by Father Jungmann between Pope Pius XI, who according to Father Jungmann, was right in abandoning(?) the temporal power of the Holy See, an obstacle to the spiritual interests of the Church, and his successor, Pius XII who safeguards the same spiritual interests through the progressive abandoning of Latin, the true "wall of obscurity" which separates the faithful from the Liturgy.

The session on the Encyclical *Musicae sacrae disciplina* given by Bishop Stohr of Mainz seemed to us to be open to a number of points of view, the summarization of which, it would seem, should try to resolve the apparent contradictions. It may be better to wait until the entire text is at hand before we try to evaluate the details, however. Still we cannot admit that the procedure presently permitted in the German "High Mass," which has the Propers in Latin and the Ordinary in German paraphrases, is the procedure desirable for the future, nor can we see that it is even the procedure de-

sired at present by a large number of pastors who think, rightly so, that the advantages of a translation of the Ordinary are very small. What is more, in all the illegitimate attempts to have solemn masses with French texts which we have heard of, it has obviously been the Proper, changing every Sunday, which has been done in translation, whereas the Ordinary was usually kept in Latin.

This session was followed by an all-too-short Latin paper of Monsignor Romita, in which the eminent specialist of liturgico-musical legislation had to limit himself to summarizing his conclusions — applied to the case of the new Offices — on a study of the problem of the liturgical language in the light of the Encyclical *Musicae sacrae*.

There remained three sessions which all, for different reasons, had to do more directly with the extension of the use of the vernacular in the solemn liturgy. For the biblical readings, we have already said that this use seems justified, and the Holy See seems never to have refused permission to the Bishops who have asked for it. Yet other Bishops do not find the matter necessary, and consequently they do not ask for it. They, too, certainly have good reasons, which the Church respects by not making the question a matter of general practice. If we consider the collective chants, however, the Encyclical *Musicae sacrae* definitely settles the question by eliminating, in a general sense, singing in the vernacular during the solemn liturgy. It does seem to us to be somewhat soon to try to reopen doors which have just been closed, when we look at the matter squarely. If we consider the prayers of the celebrant, the orations, Canon, *Pater*, etc., the Holy Father has answered in a definitive phrase, which takes away any real interest in examining further any of these notions.

Let us note, too, that the report edited by the late Archbishop O'Hara, Bishop of Kansas City, who died suddenly on the way to Assisi, carried to the Congress the intentions of the Vernacular Society, an American association for the extension of the vernacular in the liturgy.

As for the reports of Bishop Spulbeck and Bishop van Bekkum, they repeated at the Assisi Congress just what Bishop Weskamm of Berlin had said before at Lugano. They gave two particular cases: a diocese of the silent Church, where religious teaching is strictly reduced to the liturgical ceremonies, and a mission area in which the Christian community is still in formation. Must we conclude from these very real and very moving examples, which are quite exceptional, that general use of the vernacular is a universal need of the Church? Such a conclusion would go beyond its basic fact. Moreover, these special cases, which are worthy of full interest, should be discussed directly between the Bishops involved or the Apostolic Vicars and the Holy See itself. We do not see that there is anything to be gained in carrying them before the completely incompetent tribunal of an international congress on the liturgy.

Conclusions

Received in private audience at Castelgandolfo on Monday the 24th of September, His Eminence Cardinal Gerlier gave the Holy Father his assurance that this Congress, which was an undeniable demonstration of sacerdotal zeal for the good of souls, would bear fruits of obedience. We, too, hope for this end, and that will be, no doubt, the most profitable result of the meeting. A word of the Sovereign Pontiff will give us a viewpoint already noted: *The Church hears the call of the times*, the Holy Father said recently, *and the faithful must hear the call of the Church*. To tell the truth, in order to understand these times in regard to liturgical problems, the supreme Pastor and those who are associated with him in the task of guarding the Catholic liturgy are not lacking in sources of information, even outside the international congresses of liturgy. If, however, the Teaching Church condescends, in one of these congresses, to listen to the part of the Church she teaches, we think that it might not be vain archeology to draw inspiration from the liturgical formula of the Pontificale, which for such a meeting establishes each one's rights and duties: . . . *pro Deo et propter Deum exeat*

*et dicat, verumtamen memor sit conditionis suae.*¹

Then everything will be accomplished in good order and will contribute to the single purpose which must be realized by the entire Church: the glory of God through the sanctification of souls.

1. Ordination of deacons and priests.

A MARIAN ANTIPHON FOR CHRISTMASTIDE

by Dom Georges Frenaud, O.S.B.

Among the many chants which the Liturgy of Christmas consecrates to Our Lady, the ancient Antiphonaries give, following the Antiphons of the *Benedictus* and the *Magnificat*, a whole series of little gems which, for the most part, praise the Mother of God and her wonderful virginity. Today these antiphons are no longer used during the Christmas Office. The *Processionale*, however, and the *Variae Preces* have preserved quite a few of them. One of these is the subject of this article, which seeks to determine its original text.

Here it is, as given at present in the *Monastic Processionale* of Solesmes:

*Virgo Dei Genitrix,
in tua se clausit
Vera fides Geniti
et tibi virginitas*

*Quem totus non capit orbis
viscera factus homo.
purgavit crimina mundi,
inviolata manet.*

We find the same text, in whole or in part, in the various liturgical books in five different forms:

1. As an Antiphon at Christmas, usually in the group added after the antiphon *Hodie Christus natus est* at the *Magnificat* of Second Vespers.

2. As a verse of a Responsory of Matins, now dropped from use, which used to be sung at the Second or Third Nocturn at Christmas. Here is the complete text of this fine piece which wonderfully commemorates the triumphant Royalty of Christ:

*R. Continet in gremio caelum terramque Regentem
Virgo Dei Genitrix proceres comitantur Herilem, per quos*

orbis ovans Christo sub Principe pollet.

V. *Virgo Dei Genitrix, Quem totus non capit orbis in tua se clausit viscera factus homo.*

3. The same holds true for the Gradual *Benedicta et venerabilis es* which is still used today for the *Missa de Beata per annum*. Here, too, the strophe *Virgo Dei Genitrix* forms the Verse.

4. On the other hand, the second part of the text, *Vera fides Geniti*, was formerly used as a Communion Antiphon on certain feasts of the Blessed Virgin, although this practice does not seem to have been general.

5. Finally, the complete text of the Antiphon forms the two first verses of a charming little Marian hymn which manuscripts of the twelfth to fifteenth centuries sometimes ascribe to Lauds of the Assumption. To the two verses of the Antiphon, the Hymn adds a third (*Te Matrem*) and a doxology (*Gloria magna Patri*).

This final use of the *Virgo Dei Genitrix* shows us that we have here a metrical antiphon. There is nothing to indicate, however, that the text would have been originally part of a hymn to Our Lady. The Hymn which does give it to us does not appear in the manuscripts until toward the end of the eleventh century. We shall see that the Antiphon itself is found in much earlier sources.

The Communion *Vera fides Geniti* is used for the Mass of September 8 in a manuscript of Lucca (No. 606), probably written at the end of the eleventh century. We know of no more ancient source, and none again until the thirteenth century.

The Gradual *Benedicta et venerabilis* does not itself go back further than the eleventh century. Moreover, the part of our text which it uses as a verse is easy to restore with

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certainty. It cannot, therefore, help us to restore the second part of the Antiphon.

The Responsoy *Continet in gremio* is certainly more ancient. We find it as early as the end of the ninth century in the *Liber Responsorialis* of Compeigne. It is among the seventeen responsories that this manuscript assigns to the third Nocturn of Christmas. Here, too, the Verse contains only the first part of the Antiphon text. We should also say that other manuscripts of sufficient antiquity give this responsoy a completely different Verse. We cannot, then, depend on this use of the text *Virgo Dei Genitrix* to establish the composition as going back to an origin in the night Office of Christmas.

It seems clear that the original form of this text is the Antiphon itself. It is found in the three oldest antiphonaries for the Office which we know of at present: the *Liber Responsorialis* of Compeigne, the Hartker monastic Antiphony (St. Gall 390) and the Antiphony of St. Eloi of Noyon (a private collection, without page numbers, for Christmas Vespers). But the writings of St. Pascasus Radbert provide us with two other very valuable points of information which make it possible to place its origin further back. It is, in fact, to the Abbot of Corbie that we now attribute the first of the fourteen Marian sermons published in Migne's *Latin Patrology* as appendix to the works of St. Hildefonse of Toledo. This sermon on the Assumption reproduces a passage from the *Virgo Dei Genitrix*. Here are the lines containing the excerpt:

Virgo siquidem ante partum, virgo in partu et virgo post partum: Quem totus itaque non capit orbis in ejus se clausit viscera Deus factus homo (Migne, XCVI, 243 A).

This undeniable borrowing proves that St. Pascasus must have known our text. It makes it possible, moreover, to see a second illustration which is made in the famous letter *Cogitis me* on the Assumption. An innocent literary blunder attributed this writing to St. Jerome during the whole of the

Middle Ages, but Dom Lambot has clearly shown that it was by the Abbot of Corbie. Among the many allusions or borrowings which this letter makes from the Marian texts, we find these lines:

Quae (Virgo), ut diximus, non temere per Christi gratiam super choros Angelorum exaltata devotissime hodie praedicatur: quia praecessit eam Dominus et Salvator noster ex ea vera fide Genitus ad caelestia (Migne, XXX, 129 BC).

The words *vera fide Genitus* are found, as we shall see, in a very ancient version of our Antiphon. Since St. Pascasus knew of it, and since he is usually very generous by way of liturgical citations, it seems certain that we have in this letter *Cogitis me* a reference to the second part of our *Virgo Dei Genitrix*.

Now both the Sermon and the letter are youthful works of St. Pascasus (see H. Peltier, *Pascase Radbert, Abbe de Corbie*, Amiens, 1938, pp. 111-113). These writings were composed about the year 830. We can, therefore, without risk of error, attribute the Antiphon *Virgo Dei Genitrix* to the beginning of the ninth century. It does not, however, seem to have belonged to the original texts of the Christmas Office. The more ancient Beneventan manuscripts do not give it, and it is not found in the Roman antiphonaries of the twelfth century, although these seem to have preserved certain archaic aspects of the original Roman liturgy. We may assume some evidence in favor of a Gallic origin at the beginning of the Carolingian "renaissance." Documents are lacking, however, for establishing this as certain. It is obvious, on the other hand, that by the eleventh century the Antiphon was already in use throughout the Christian world (Spain, Italy, France, Germany, and possibly England).

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What was, in the beginning, the exact text of this Antiphon? For the first part all sources agree (a single manuscript replaces *orbis* with *mundus*, which does not alter the

sense). The present text is, therefore, certainly the original.

It is not the same for the second part of the Antiphon, which is found mainly with two variations. One of them is of no interest except for future classification of the manuscripts; it deals with the last word of the Antiphon, “*manet*,” which sometimes becomes *permanet*, and sometimes *permansit*. The other variant, on the contrary, changes the very meaning of the passage and should be given full consideration. The expression *Vera fides geniti* of the beginning of the second part is often replaced in some versions by *Vera fide genitus*, or somewhat more rarely by *Vera fides genitus*. We find, too, for the same passage, other variants in single cases: *Vera fides genitris*, *Vera quidem geniti*, *Vera fide geniti*. One manuscript of Norcia had originally *Vere quidem genitus*, which a second hand has corrected to *Vere fides geniti*. Which, then, is the authentic version?

If we use each of the three main variants in their context, (1) *Vera fides geniti*, (2) *Vera fide genitus*, and (3) *Vera fides genitus*, we can immediately make certain observations.

Variant 3 does not make acceptable sense. It would have to be translated thus: “True faith, the Begotten-One has washed away the crimes of the world.” This elliptic style, however, was rarely used in the Middle Ages. It is much more likely, if not certain, that this is a case of a copyist’s error, placing *fides* where *fide* should have been. We shall see, furthermore, that this error, followed at St. Gall, was widespread only in the manuscripts descended from that school.

Variant 1 was used in a more widespread fashion, and forms the version we have at present as standard. It is not useful, however, without certain serious drawbacks. We cannot, indeed, translate it as “The true faith of the Begotten-One,” that is, of Christ. Patristic tradition has never attributed faith to Christ. The only possible meaning would be “The true faith in Him Who has been begotten to wash

away the sins of the world," or possibly, "The true faith as taught by Him Who is begotten." According to St. Paul (Romans, III, 26), St. Augustine speaks thus several times of *fides Christi* in the sense of *fides in Christum*. There remains, however, a serious objection to this reading and this interpretation. It comes from the following words: *pur-gavit crimina mundi*. Is it really our faith which washes away the sins of the world?

Properly speaking, it is Christ, the Begotten-One Himself who brings about this universal purification: *Agnus Dei qui tollit peccata mundi*. Our personal faith purifies only our individual faults. It achieves only our subjective redemption. Yet, if we do not make this faith a source or effective cause, but rather a formal cause, the phrase maintains some meaning, difficult no doubt, but acceptable. Faith in Christ, to the measure that it is developed, dispels the shadows of sin. Thus light destroys darkness. And this is also the sense which we must at present understand when we sing either the Antiphon or the Hymn *Virgo Dei Genitrix*. Nevertheless, taken thus, this strophe seems stiff and wooden. The piece is completely Marian; the phrase *Vera fides geniti* would really have no Marian significance (since it deals with our own faith); it would, moreover, have no link with the ending of the strophe: *et tibi virginitas inviolata manet*.

Everything seems normal, however, with Variant 2: *Vera fide Genitus*. The meaning seems very clear: Christ, begotten through the true faith of Mary, has washed away the sins of the world, and, because of this very fact of its accomplishment by faith, the virginity of the Mother of God has remained intact. There is a close connection between the two parts of the strophe, and the first words evoke a thought which is both very rich and completely traditional.

It is at just this point, however, that paleographers would stop us. In a conflict between two versions, they usually give preference to the more difficult reading, since that is the one which would have had more opportunities to be corrected. In this case, no corrector would have thought of

changing this *vera fide genitus*, which is quite clear, into *vera fides geniti*, which is much less so. The opposite would seem more likely. Thus from the paleographer's point of view, the more difficult reading would be the older one.

We must, therefore, have recourse to a chronological comparison of the evidence. Before making it, however, we can note that in this case Variant (3) from the manuscripts of Noyon and St. Gall offers us another explanation, which is also very logical, of the divergencies which we have observed. Supposing that the original text was *Vera fide genitus*, we see that the simple error of a scribe, involuntary and mechanical, could have changed it to *vera fides genitus*, which is nearly incomprehensible. It could well have been this scribe's error, then, which drew the attention of later copyists. Not being aware of the original reading, they may have thought that they were right in changing the error from *genitus* to *geniti*, which, in fact, does improve the clarity of the text somewhat. Thus we could have passed, logically enough, from *vera fide genitus* to *vera fides geniti* in two simple steps of a double error.

We were able to examine the manuscript sources.¹ We used the photographic copies of manuscripts which are kept in the Salle de Paleographie at Solesmes. We have been able to add to these the letter *Cogitis me* of St. Pascasus Radbert, mentioned above, and the homily *Congrue satis* of St. Odilon of Cluny on the Gospel of the Assumption, which also borrows from our antiphon the expression *vera fide genitus*. (Migne, P.L., XCVI, 263 A).

The ultimate scope of these manuscripts will be realized only by their classification into "family" groups, but for the time being a simple chronological classification would seem to authorize a solid decision in favor of the reading *Vera fide Genitus*. This reading is given in the only two sources presently known to be from the ninth century. The manuscripts of the tenth century also favor it. The readings in the two

1. For students of paleography who may wish to examine this list of sources in detail, we note here that it is published in the *Revue Gregorienne*, 1952, No. 6 (November-December), p. 206.

which disagree have no serious basis, as they probably represent a copyist's error which goes back to an older common source of both. At this time there is no trace of the reading *Vera fides geniti*. In the eleventh century most of the manuscripts continue to favor the original reading of the ninth century. Two manuscripts reproduce the error *vera fides genitus*. The reading *vera fides geniti* also now appears for the first time in four sources.

The manuscripts of the twelfth century are about equally divided between the old ninth century reading and the new correction *vera fides geniti*. They occur in Italy, Germany and France.

A few explorations of the manuscripts of the thirteenth century show the persistence of the two more common readings, the oldest and the newest, but the latter, *vera fides geniti* tends to become more and more common. It is the only reading used in the Communion antiphons, and it seems to have been chosen at the outset for the Hymn *Virgo Dei Genitrix*, which goes back to the end of the eleventh century at the earliest.

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However summary this examination of manuscript resources may be, it gives a very clear and strong presumption in favor of the reading *vera fide genitus*. This reading, moreover, does not merely represent a restoration of an authentic text. We also make a real gain in the doctrinal value of the text, and find it to be much more in conformity with the theological tradition of the high Middle Ages. In the summary of our little inquiry, this aspect of the problem deserves to be given a brief separate consideration.

Our antiphon is a Christmas chant as well as a Marian chant. It combines two qualities which are apparently contrary, but which are characteristic of the ancient Roman liturgy. It is both conservative and allusive. The first strophe returns us to that very atmosphere of Marian devotion which characterized the first seven centuries of the Christian era.

We honor in Mary both her perpetual virginity and her divine motherhood. The three first words tell the whole story. The development which follows only serves to convey the admiration elicited by those two opposing and apparently irreconcilable aspects of the Mystery: a God who infinitely transcends all the limits of creation, and a Child who is yet clasped to the maternal bosom. This is a basically lyric theme which leaves the soul suspended before the incomprehensible. The antithesis is very powerfully underscored, and every word enhances it. This is a pure contemplation of the Church in ecstasy before the ineffable miracle. We find a similar passage in the beautiful Responsory *Sancta et Immaculata*: "*Quia quem caeli capere non poterant, tuo gremio contulisti.*"

The second strophe is somewhat more human in aspect. Here, too, the first three words seem to be the key. This is why it is so important to establish their original form. This *fide Genitus* is a parallel to the *verbo concepit* which the Liturgy attributes to Mary in several other chants of Christmas. Thus it forms an echo of the many-times-repeated words of St. Augustine: "*Non enim Virgo libidine, sed fide concepit*" (Sermo LXIX, *de Verbis Domini*, n.X, c.3, n.4, Migne, P.L., XXXVIII, 442). The *vera fides* is the living faith, that which blossoms into true charity. This also brought the great Bishop of Hippo to say: "*Propter cujus sanctum in Virginis utero conceptionem, non concupiscentia carnis urente factam, sed fidei charitate fervente, ideo dicitur natus de Spiritu Sancto et de Maria Virgine*". (Sermo CCXIV, n.6, Migne, *loc. cit.*, 1069).

We cannot refrain, either, from citing again Sermon CXCVI (XIII in *Natali Domini*) which inspired the Middle Ages to one of the most beautiful Marian sequences: "*Angelus nuntiat, Virgo audit, credit et concepit. Fides in mente, Christus in ventre*" (Migne, P.L., XXXVIII, 1019). If, then, the Incarnation is, on the part of God, a work of grace and mercy, it is, from man's point of view, the fruit of the living faith of the Virgin Mary. The universal work of salvation began to be accomplished in that act of faith. By it Mary becomes the perfect model of the Church, which

also ceaselessly engenders Christ through its faith. She is also the perfect model of every Christian soul, which continues, through this same living faith, to give birth to Christ within itself and around it. Who would fail to see in this an echo and wonderful development of the greeting which Elizabeth gave her cousin: "*Beata quae credidisti, perficientur in te quae dicta sunt tibi a Domino.*"?

The rest of the antiphon, however, lengthens our perspective. Since Mary's faith engendered the Saviour, she has, through Him, achieved the redemption of the world. *Vera fide Genitus purgavit crimina mundi.* Moreover, this miraculous conception through faith alone is, for the Mother of God, a guarantee of her virginity. True faith is both chaste and fruitful. When it attacks sin, it purifies. When it lives in a virgin soul, it produces this motherhood without jeopardizing this virginity. Our *vera fide Genitus* thus explains why, in Mary, virginity remains inviolate.

In these few lines of remarkable seriousness, liturgical prayer has gathered together the essence of Marian piety as it was known to the first centuries of the Christian era: the faith of a virgin Mother, the perfect ideal of what the entire Church and each of its members should attain. We cannot help but hope that one day soon this beautiful text will be restored to an honored place in the public celebration of the Mystery of Christmas, which is also, in its way, the Mystery of Mary.

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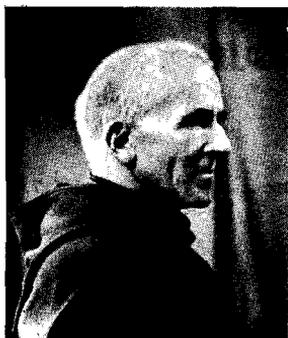
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