

LITURGICAL AND RUBRICAL BOOKS OF THE ROMAN RITE

“...The liturgical books are the books which contain the official text of the “rites and ceremonies”⁷ of the sacred liturgy.” J.B. O’Connell, *The Celebration of Mass*; (⁷ Cf. SRC 4266; CJC 2.)

In the Roman Rite the chief liturgical books are:

A. FOR THE CELEBRATION OF MASS AND THE CEREMONIES OF HOLY WEEK:

- *Missale Romanum* [MR] (1962)
- *Ordo Hebdomadae Sanctae Instauratus* [OHS] (1962; SSPX uses 1955 *grosso modo*)
- *Memoriale Rituum* (1920; used as a reference, since it has been superseded by the OHS and the 1962 *Missale Romanum*. However, the SSPX still makes use of a few rubrics from this book; cf. *General House Decisions* sheet.)

Supplements to the *Missale Romanum* and used during a Solemn or Pontifical High Mass are:

- *Epistola / Evangelia* [Epistolary / Evangelarium] (which contains the Epistles read by the subdeacon and the Gospels read by the deacon) [1959]
- *Pontifical Canon* (this contains only the *Canon*, and is used in place of the altar cards) [1962]

B. FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE DIVINE OFFICE:

- *Breviarium Romanum* [Breviary] (1962)
- *Martyrologium Romanum* [Martyrology] (1923)

C. FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS AND SACRAMENTALS:

- *Rituale Romanum* [RR] (1964; this is actually the 1962 edition)
- *Pontificale Romanum* [PR or Pontifical] (1888; and the new edition of Part II, 1962)
- *Ceremoniale Episcoporum* [CE] (1886; for the pontifical celebration of the sacred liturgy in greater churches)
- *Ritus Pontificalis Ordinis Hebdomadae Sanctae Instaurati* [Pontifical version of the OHS] (1957)
- *Clementine Instruction* (1731; concerning the Forty Hours’ Prayer)

D. THE OFFICIAL MUSICAL TEXT USED IN THE CELEBRATION OF MASS:

- *Kyriale* (1905)
- *Graduale Romanum* (1907)
- *Cantorinus* (1911)
- *Officium Hebdomadae Sanctae* (1959)

[All of these are compiled and used commonly in the *Liber Usualis* (1962); this book also contains the Lessons and Nocturns of Matins for the greater feast days]

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ROMAN MISSAL

Formerly, the *Roman Missal* was divided into several books. When the solemn form of Mass (*i.e.*, Solemn High Mass) was the norm in the Church, and before the advent of Low Masses, the formulas of the Mass, readings and chants were placed in various books to suit the necessity of the different ministers who used them. These books were:

- *Sacramentary* (which contained the essentially sacerdotal formulas for the celebrant)
- *Lectionary* (which contained the extracts from Sacred Scripture that were used in the Divine Office)
- *Evangelarium* (which contained the Gospels read by the deacon)
- *Epistolarium* (which contained the Epistles read by the subdeacon)
- *Antiphonary* (used during the Divine Office, but in a special form called a *Graduale*, it was also used during Mass; it contained all that was needed for the singers)
- *Ordo* (the other books listed above contained almost no rubrics, as these were set down in this book)

When priests began to say Mass individually on a more frequent basis, it was necessary to combine all of these various books into one, since the celebrant now began to also recite the parts formerly delegated to other ministers. So the custom of using a Missal and a Sacramentary simultaneously gradually took place from about the ninth to the eleventh centuries. However, during the thirteenth through the fifteenth centuries, the Missal as a single book, replaced the Sacramentary for good.

During the ninth to the fifteenth century, the text of the *Canon* (*Te igitur* to *Agnus Dei*) remained the same, though the Ordinary of the Mass was further developed.

With the invention of the Gutenberg printing press (whose first product was a Catholic Bible printed with the permission of the Holy See), the production of missals was greatly increased, and the first printed (not handcopied) *Roman Missal* was in Milan in 1474.

John Burckard (died 1506), a famous papal master of ceremonies, wrote an *Ordo Missae*, using the *Ordines* of the Papal Court and the Vatican manuscripts of Sacramentaries and Missals as the basis of his work. It was published in 1502 by the order of Pope Alexander VI and even to this day it serves as the basis for the general rubrics of the Mass and of the section, *Ritus Servandus* in the missal. Starting in 1557, the *Defectus in Celebratione Missarum* was introduced as integral part of the missal. The author of this important section, the instructions of which come from the teaching of theologians, is unknown.

Due to the diversity of usage taking place with the liturgy, the effects of Protestantism on the Mass, and the abuses which were frequently taking place, the Council of Trent (1545-1563) determined that a revision and reform was necessary. In 1562, a commission was appointed for just this purpose. The revision, which continued even after the Council of Trent ended and subsequently was entrusted to the succeeding Pope, Pius IV (1559-1565) and then to Pope St. Pius V (1566-1572), was finally published, and imposed by the Papal bull, *Quo primum tempore*. This was affective on all churches of the West who were not using a rite of Mass that could legitimately claim usage for 200 hundred years or more. This was the first time that a rite of Mass had been imposed by the Holy See, and also that a missal was to be officially published by the Vatican.

However, this revision did not introduce a new rite of Mass; it was simply a reform, clarification and codification of the Roman Rite of Mass. The Ordinary of the Mass was fixed definitively, and it also introduced officially many customs that were being widely practiced, namely, the saying of the *Last Gospel*. Also, the number of *Sequences* were reduced to four (later, a fifth one was added: *Stabat Mater*), the *Prefaces* to eleven (four more have been added since), the proper *Communicantes* to six, and the proper *Hanc igitur* to two.

The Latin text found for the sung texts in the Missal of Pope Saint Pius V is the *Itala Vetusta*, which is an Old Latin version that dates from the second century. *Itala Vetusta* was in use previous to the Vulgate Bible. However, the Vulgate (which was finished by St. Jerome circa 404) is used for the various readings during Mass.

Under Clement VIII, the Common of Nonvirgins and the section, *Rubricae Generales*, XX, appeared in the Missal officially for the first time. Pope Clement VIII also found it necessary to correct and condemn in his brief, *Cum sanctissimum*, certain abuses that had crept into use, despite the warnings of Pope St. Pius V, just thirty years after the first publication of the *Roman Missal* by the Holy See.

Thirty years later again, Pope Urban VIII brought out another revision of the missal. This revision was chiefly concerned with making the rubrics simpler and easier to understand. The liturgical calendar, which had become quite cluttered by this time, was also simplified, by having some of the feasts reduced.

Pope Saint Pius X brought about a great liturgical reform in the calendar and in the general rubrics that affected the saying of Votive and Requiem Masses, and in the use of commemorations. St. Pius X restored also Gregorian chant to its proper place in the liturgy, the proper ferials and Sundays (especially of Lent) throughout the year, which previously, had often been neglected. Pope Benedict XV issued St. Pius X's reformed Missal in 1920. Several new items were added to this missal as well, namely the *Prefaces* for Saint Joseph and of the dead.

A decree issued on March 23, 1955, introduced several changes to the missal and breviary which allowed for greater simplicity and shortening the length of both the Mass and of the Office. Again, both had become bogged down with non-essentials to the point that the breviary had become a very tedious task and the multiplication of commemorations almost ridiculous.

Also in 1955, the Restored Order of Holy Week was published and imposed. While some of the "reforms" are quite regrettable (e.g., the ceremonies of Good Friday are a mere shadow of their former selves), it must be applauded that the ceremonies of Holy Week have been finally restored to their proper times of being celebrated in the day or at night (previously, the ceremonies of the Easter Vigil were being performed *in the morning*, which totally destroyed the significance of the symbolism of the Paschal Candle in the darkness of the night, and of the very meaning of the word, *vigil*).

In 1957, another slightly revised version of the Restored Order of Holy Week was printed.

In April of 1962, a newly revised missal was published. This revision greatly simplified the classification system of the various feast days from a complex system of a great number of confusing variables (majors, minors, duplexes, simplexes, semis, octaves, and etc.) to a simple one of first, second, third and fourth class with a privileged version of each. Thankfully and at last, the offices of solely reading the Epistle and Gospel during Solemn Mass were restored to the subdeacon and the deacon (formerly, both readings were read silently by the celebrant first, and then sung by the sacred ministers). This was the final hold out from when the principle began, *the celebrant recites all parts said by everyone else*, which began when Low Masses were first introduced.

Later in 1962, another revised missal was published, with the insertion of St. Joseph in the *Communicantes* of the *Canon* of the Mass. It was the first time since St. Gregory the Great (c. 600AD) had codified the *Canon*, that any Pope had ever made a change or an addition to this most sacred portion of the Mass.

THE SACRED CONGREGATION OF RITES

The Sacred Congregation of Rites (SRC; in Latin the letters are reversed) was an office of the Church that was immediately concerned with the sacred liturgy of the Latin Church and also of the beatification and canonization of the saints. It was founded by Pope Sixtus V in 1588, and was basically disbanded after the modernization in the Church after Vatican II. The Congregation of Divine Worship has now replaced the SRC. Nevertheless, the various decrees of the SRC from 1588 until 1962 are of great importance and of binding force for those who employ the 1962 *Missale Romanum*.

What is the SRC? The SRC "*is an executive tribunal, and only per accidens is it a legislative body.*" J.B. O'Connell, pg. 21. The decrees issued by the SRC have the authority of the pope, "*even if they had not been referred to him.*"⁹⁵ Ibid; S.R.C., 2916.

The decrees of the SRC were published first in the official *Collections*, and then after 1926 in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*. Without delving into the technical juridical aspects of the decrees issued by the SRC, let it suffice to state, that to neglect or disregard these decisions would be an act of great disdain towards the Holy See, and towards the proper carrying out of the rubrics of the sacred liturgy.

RUBRICIANS AND THEIR BOOKS

The word rubric comes from the Latin word for *red*, hence, *rubrica* means *in the red*, that is the instructions in the missal that is printed in red ink. A rubrician is one who has made the liturgical law (which is a part of canon law) his study and expertise. There have been many rubricians over the centuries, who have all written various books on rubrical matters. One might ask, why have so many books been written, when the Mass has remained basically the same for so many centuries? The answer to this is very simple. There have been many revisions over the past years, and so consequently, the rubrics will also be affected in some manner. Also, customs have changed from country to country, and so rubricians attempt to take these into account as well in their books. However it can be stated with certitude that all of these rubricians have agreed on the general principles that govern the rubrics of the Roman Rite. Lastly, each rubrician attempts to present the rubrics in an ever clearer and precise manner, than done previously.

At the same time however, it is clear that “...*the opinion of any writer (i.e., rubrician) is worth as much as the reasons on which it based, and no more. Hence the more authoritative writers usually give the reasons (rubrics, decisions of S.R.C., customary law, general principles of ceremonial – embodied by the rubrics themselves... or deduced from particular laws...*” J.B. O’Connell, pg. 24.

The main rubricians in English are:

- Fr. Adrian Fortescue [England]
- Canon J. B. O’Connell [Wales]
- Msgr. Laurence O’Connell [American]

A little explanation of each author:

Adrian Fortescue was an incredible man and priest. A first rate scholar who could lecture in at least eight foreign languages and was an expert in Greek and Hebrew, the Divine Liturgies of the Eastern Rites and Middle Eastern archeology. He wrote profusely in his short lifetime, and his most famous and classic work is *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described*, first published in 1917. Previous to this, the book that was mainly used by the English in Great Britain, was one published in Italian! A great debt of honor is owed to Fortescue’s tremendous work, and J. B. O’Connell completed the subsequent revisions to his book up until 1962 (though in 1964, a loose-leaf addendum was added).

Fortescue assumes that you already know the general principles, and consequently he does not list them systematically.

Canon J. B. O’Connell was a Welshman who wrote several books on different liturgical aspects. His books are exceptional for their clearness of description and the additional information that they provide, which Fortescue omits. O’Connell is also extremely practical in his opinions. In addition to editing Fortescue’s book, J. B. O’Connell also wrote his own book on rubrics, *The Celebration of Mass*. From 1940 until at least 1958, his book was produced in three separate volumes, Books I-III. However, afterwards Books I-III were combined into one book. The 1962 version was the last edition of his book published, though it was reprinted several times until 1965.

J. B. O’Connell provides you with some of the general principles, though not systematically.

Msgr. Laurence O’Connell, was an American who was at one time the Master of Ceremonies at St. Mary of the Lake Seminary in Mundelein, IL. He co-authored *The Book of Ceremonies* with Fr. Walter J. Schmitz, who wrote a few books of his own and was a former Papal Master of Ceremonies. The last edition of his book was published in 1956, though it was reprinted several times after that until 1958. O’Connell’s book is clear and concise, and provides many necessary details lacking in the aforementioned, as well as the legitimate American liturgical customs.

L. O’Connell is the only author in English who systematically provides you with almost all of the general principles, the remainder of the ones that he does not can be deduced by a simple cross reference of the other rubricians and the liturgical books.

There are of course other rubricians who write in other languages, such as:

- Wapelhorst [Latin; an American Franciscan]

- Martinucci [Italian; former Papal Master of Ceremonies]
- Stehle [English; American Benedictine]
- Haegy (co-authored with La Vavas seur and Stercky) [French; Holy Ghost Father liturgy professor to Archbishop Lefebvre at the French Seminary in Rome; much renowned for his profound knowledge and love of the liturgy]
- Van der Stappen [Latin; Belgium Auxiliary bishop]
- Callewaert [Latin; Belgium archbishop]
- Moretti [Latin; Italian]
- De Carpo [Latin; Italian]
- De Herdt [Latin, French]

Finally, one other book in English that ought to be mentioned is *Matters Liturgical*, which authored by Frs. Joseph Wuest, Thomas W. Mullaney and William Barry, is a definitive and handy resource for many various matters of rubrics.