

September 20, 2007



Dear Fathers, Deacons, and Pastoral Administrators:

On July 7, 2007, our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI issued a *Motu Proprio* entitled *Summorum Pontificum*, in which he indicates the occasions when the Missal of Blessed Pope John XXIII issued in 1962 (the seventh "typical" edition of the *Missale Romanum* of Pope Saint Pius V), may be celebrated legitimately in the Roman Catholic Church.

At the same time, our Holy Father wrote a letter to the Bishops of the world. In that letter, the Holy Father reminds us that the *Motu Proprio* does not detract from the authority of the Second Vatican Council and the subsequent promulgation of the Roman Missal by Pope Paul VI in 1970 (the third "typical" edition of which was issued by Pope John Paul II in 2001). The Holy Father makes the distinction that the 1970 Missal is the ordinary or usual form for the celebration of the Mass, while the letter permits the celebration of the Mass according to the Missal of 1962 as an extraordinary or unusual form.

In response to the expressed fear that the *Motu Proprio* might lead to disarray and division, the Holy Father reminds the Bishops that the use of the 1962 Missal "presupposes a certain degree of liturgical formation and some knowledge of the Latin language; neither of these is found very often" and concludes that the 1970 Missal "will certainly remain the ordinary form of the Roman Rite...."

Additionally, the Holy Father indicates to the Bishops: "I very much wish to stress that these new norms do not in any way lessen your own authority and responsibility, either for the liturgy or for the pastoral care of your faithful. Each bishop, in fact, is the moderator of the liturgy in his own diocese. Nothing is taken away, then, from the authority of the bishop, whose role remains that of being watchful that all is done in peace and serenity."

In light of the Holy Father's admonition to the Bishops, I have discussed with the members of the Presbyteral Council and with the Diocesan Liturgical Commission how best to implement *Summorum Pontificum* in the Diocese of Helena. They wisely advised that we move systematically and deliberately so that the implementation of the *Motu Proprio* will be distinguished by the quality it deserves.

Some parishioners have requested the Latin Liturgy. In view of this pastoral need and our limited resources, including the few priests who can appropriately celebrate in Latin, the Councils have advised that initially we establish one place in the Diocese where the Mass according to the 1962 Missal will be celebrated. I will remain in conversation with our Councils regarding this matter so that together we may provide outreach and ministry to those desiring the celebration of Latin Liturgy.

It is clear that wherever the 1962 Missal is utilized, the priest must be fully cognizant of the rubrics of that Missal and be competent in Latin. This is no easy task; most of our priests simply do not possess these qualifications. It is also my desire that the Mass according to the 1962 Missal is to be celebrated in a parish context, under the pastoral supervision of the pastor of that parish. Additionally, in keeping with long-established diocesan policy, written permission from my office is required before any priest who is not a priest of the Diocese of Helena may celebrate Liturgy here.

O F F I C E O F T H E B I S H O P

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