

## The little needful

**Since the election of Benedict XVI on 19 April 2005, and more so in recent months, Catholics attached to the traditional worship of the Church have been tossed about by waves of speculation, excitement, disappointment, and gloom as rumours of the pontiff's hoped-for decree on the traditional Latin Mass have risen up, rolled by, and subsided. With the approach of 5 May, the Feast of St Pius V who codified the Roman liturgy, the tide of expectation is rising again.**

The Church  
is being  
crucified

The papal document, if it comes, will lift – so we believe – the restraints under which the Latin Mass and its lovers now labour, ending an era of persecution within the Church of orthodox prayers and believers, and opening a new age of religious freedom.

We should be under no illusions. While the event might prove an occasion of some immediate joy – and provide a sense of justice done to our ancestors, and to ourselves from whom the heritage they left us had been stolen – the reality will be faint lights of dawn on a day that opens cold, dark, and threatening.

### Grim dawn

Few Catholics will greet with gladness this solemn event. A good many, perhaps most, will be staggered, perplexed, silenced; while those who claim to “own” the post-Conciliar revolution will shake the Church with their anger and resentment. Divisions will harden. It is the way we are. We ought not to underestimate how far most Western Catholics have been cut off from their history, now a foreign thing to them, and how many are those who, not being entirely free of the Catholic past, still feel the claims of it upon them, and hate it all the more for that.

We do not live in a benign moment. The Church is not just bumped, bruised and giddy after a twentieth century round of fisticuffs with the world, the flesh and the devil. This time it is different. The Church is not “reeling but erect”. It is being crucified. Christ died, so too will the Church – and, indeed, we *are* dying.

*Oriens* will not essay here all that has happened since 1959 when John XXIII threw open to the world the windows of the Church. But we do call to witness the assessment offered in 1980 by Henri de Lubac S.J., one of the greatest theological influences upon that ill-starred Council:

The drama of Vatican II consists in that fact that, instead of having been conceived by saints – as Trent was – it has been monopolised by intellectuals. Above all, it has been monopolised by certain theologians whose theology

begins with the assumption that faith should be updated in accord with the demands of the world, and emancipated from its supposed condition of inferiority in relation to modern civilisation. The locus of theology is no longer the Christian community – that is, the Church – but has become the interpretation of lone individuals. In this sense the post-Vatican II period represents the victory of Protestantism over Catholicism from within.

These words should be engraved upon the tombs of Popes Roncalli and Montini. For whatever good they intended, the fuzzy inspirations of the one, and the anxious labours of the other, were the catalyst for an explosive act of self-demolition.

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### Editor

Gary Scarrabelotti

### Executive Editor

R.J. Stove

### Contributing Editors

Gerard McManus

Stephen McNerney

Martin Sheehan

### Layout

ESP design and marketing

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# Getting it right at last

During November 2006, the Vatican ruled that the liturgical misrendering of *pro multis* as “for all” had to be dropped in favour of “for many” in all future translations of the Eucharistic Prayer. *Oriens’* Executive Editor **R. J. Stove** provides background to this decision.

“When I use a word,” Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, “it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less.”

“The question is,” said Alice, “whether you can make words mean so many different things.”

“The question is,” said Humpty Dumpty, “which is to be master – that’s all.”

- Lewis Carroll, *Through The Looking-Glass*

**To read the more absurd defences of that most regrettable among modern liturgical mistranslations – the rendering of Latin’s *pro multis* (“for many”) as “for all” – is to remember Humpty Dumpty’s freewheeling lexical approach.**

Sometimes we have been asked to believe that *pro multis* can actually mean “for all”. Others affirm that maybe it cannot actually mean “for all”, but the original words in Semitic tongues can. Still others affirm that maybe the original words in Semitic tongues cannot either, but only “Jansenists” (never defined) and other extremist troublemakers ever make an issue of the problem.

## Dissension and grief

Ever since Pope Paul VI promulgated the *Novus Ordo* Mass in 1970, the “for all” mistranslation has caused particular dissension and grief. It actually originated not in 1970 but in 1967, when the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) decided to use the phrase in its rendering of the Roman Canon. The result so obviously threw into confusion the precise nature of Christ’s salvific powers, that no good could ever have come of it.

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The “victory of Protestantism” does not, of course, mean a victory for the Bible religion of the Protestant sects. Though in Central and South America it certainly looks that way where a Catholic continent is being eaten up at an observable rate by their advance. That is only one facet of the “Rontini” bequest. What it let into the heart of the Church is all the generations of Protestantism at once: and of these the most dangerous is the latest – the one in which belief in God and revelation has died leaving private judgement to reign alone. This is Western secularism – an anodyne term for a monster. It is Luther and Calvin turned atheist: the enemy of all things past, and worshipper of the little god *Self* enthroned uneasily and capriciously upon the present moment.

Despite the perduring wretchedness of our condition, we continue to find among so-called “conservative” and even “traditionalist” Catholics a Micawberish optimism. For years now a palpable, if vaguely formed, expectation has persisted that good Catholic times “are just around the corner.” If only.

### Secular markets

The people who are triumphing over the Church, both within and without, do not intend that their moment should pass. Contrary to its propaganda of freedom, the victor’s dispensation does not permit a free market contest of ideas in which it is possible to contemplate Catholic teaching and morality competitively carrying the day. The secular market in ideologies is not, and has never been, free for the Church. It was created, in fact, to check, roll back and, ultimately, to destroy it. This is what freedom in Western secular society means and – make no mistake – its most committed adherents will fight to keep it that way.

Italy will prove to be the cockpit for this contest, for it is in Italy that the Church in the West is showing

the most marked signs of recovery. Although it lost its battles over divorce and abortion long ago, in 2005 the Church in Italy defeated a referendum aimed at repealing restrictions on artificial insemination and embryonic research. This year it is pressing Italian legislators to reject proposals to legalise homosexual and lesbian ‘marriages’. Catholic lay movements, priests and religious have rallied in the streets. The fury of the now contested cultural establishment is rising. Threats have been made against the Pope and the President of the Italian Episcopal Conference, the Archbishop of Genoa, Angelo Bagnasco. His cathedral was spray painted by radical homosexual activists with “Shame, Bagnasco”, and some of his parish churches with “Death to Bagnasco”. He now goes about accompanied by armed guards.

To newspaper readers and TV watchers far away, this might sound like no more than the theatre of liberal democratic politics. It would be a mistake to think so. Italy has a long and visceral tradition of anti-clericalism, and it intersects in a murky underground with red-shirt Jacobinism, Trotskyite and mainstream communism, Masonic money, and now radical feminist, homosexual and environmentalist groups. What we might describe as “card-carrying” Catholics, including clergy, belong to all of these. Should they judge that the Church is winning back lost ground in Italy, the disparate network will converge. The consequences for the Church will be, let us say, frightful as predicted.

Given the potential correlation of forces, the business of restoring freedom to the historic Latin Mass will be no light matter. It is something that is not supposed to happen. It will signal to the worldly powers, and their friends in the Church, a revival of a dangerous adversarial spirit thought to have been, if not extinguished, then tamed at least. This is why, especially in Europe, they

watch Pope Benedict’s every move. They fear that he will reinforce the pro-life, pro-family campaign (no more at present than a manageable irritant) with new energies revitalised by a liturgical reform that harks back explicitly to the great Catholic tradition.

This is something the secular powers-that-be know that they cannot match – and that, for them, is an alarming thought. The culturally sensitive, ultra-tolerant mask of modern Europe is about to drop.

### Just do it

Can such things be pre-empted? What must be done? The answers in turn are *Yes* and *Very little*.

Every priest can go to his church or chapel at an empty hour, bar the doors, and celebrate the Old Mass. With or without his *celebret*, with or without the support of new pontifical legislation, he should just do it.

Next, behind those same locked doors, and in the privacy of his heart, every priest can consecrate himself, his parish, diocese, city and country, and even other particular countries mentioned by name, to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. With or without theological comfort, with or without the professional sanction of his peers, he should just do it.

These are terrifying assignments to ask of anyone, of course. But we need to remember that in any battle the enemy is just as frightened as we are and, in this one, more so. There is nothing more fills secular man with dread than the secret work and prayer of a priest. There is great danger here, for from within these spiritual enclosures One might be invoked who can “pull down the mighty from their thrones.”

So, we do have a choice. We can continue as we are, down and dying. Or we can just get up and do the very little needful.

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On those powers, the orthodox teaching is this: that while Christ obviously wishes everyone to be saved, numerous persons shall consciously reject His grace, through perverse misuse of their God-derived free will. It is true that, contrary to the more feral assertions of cyberspace's lay magisterium, we may not say with absolute certitude which particular human beings have condemned themselves to hell. (For all we know, even Hitler and Stalin might have achieved the grace of final repentance in their last seconds of life, although – if one may adopt Damon Runyon's phraseology on such a subject – that is not where the smart money is.) Nonetheless we are duty-bound and charity-bound to admit that hell is indeed the destination for certain obstinate individuals.

The *Catechism of the Council of Trent* emphasises the crucial difference between the traditional understanding of Christ's Passion, and modern misconstructions of that Passion. It says:

"[W]e believe that the Redeemer shed His Blood for the salvation of all men; but looking to the advantages which mankind derive from its efficacy, we find, at once, that they are not extended to the whole, but to a large proportion of the human race ... With great propriety, therefore, were the words, 'for all,' not used."

St Alphonsus Liguori similarly observed in his treatise *The Holy Eucharist*:

"This precious blood is (in itself) sufficiently (*sufficienter*) able to save all men, but (on our part) effectually (*efficaciter*) it does not save all - it saves only those who co-operate with grace."

More than two centuries after St

Alphonsus, the theologian Monsignor Klaus Gamber (whose *Reform of the Roman Liturgy* appeared with an introduction by then-Cardinal Ratzinger) described "for all", in 1987, as "a falsification which directly compromises the faith." To which it is worth adding that Protestant, as well as Catholic, Bibles eschewed the words "for all" in the Synoptic Gospels.

### Efficacy vs. sufficiency

A simple secular example will help illustrate the difference between the Passion's efficacy and its sufficiency. Suppose a man has deposited in my bank account a fortune, intended for my lasting good. Will I necessarily benefit from this fortune? By no means. I might, for instance, remain unaware that I have been given it. Or I might refuse to draw on it, believing it to be a computing error on the bank's part. Or I might draw on it, but waste it on vicious pastimes that will do me no lasting good whatsoever. Yet none of these possible responses will have altered the donor's original intention.

Such banal remarks would hardly be worth making but for the increasingly desperate rationalisations of "for all" which liturgical pseudo-scholarship contrived. A myth has emerged that Aramaic, the language in which Our Lord spoke, lacked any means for differentiating between "many" and "all". One would think from this myth that Aramaic was as primitive an argot as present-day Ebonics. In fact, it constituted a medium as respectable, elaborate, and internationally accepted for international political, diplomatic and business communications as Latin would be in the Middle Ages, or French in the nineteenth century. To report that "for all" was the sole, or for that matter the sole major, ICEL mistranslation would be pleasant but false. Space precludes detailed analysis here of the approximately four hundred errors the ICEL perpetrated; readers craving

more data are referred to Richard Toporoski's Fall 1977 *Communio* article "The Language of Worship".

### Arinze speaks

Fortunately the Congregation for Divine Worship's Cardinal Francis Arinze, as reported by *Catholic World News* on 18 November 2006, ordered that in future "for all" should be scrapped in favour of "for many". Henceforward it will now be much harder for the modern liturgy's defenders to tie themselves in knots trying to excuse the "for all" foolishness. (Certain prelates will, admittedly, continue to try. *National Catholic Reporter* on 10 January 2007 quoted Bishop Donald Trautman of Erie, Pennsylvania, as having complained that restoring the correct meaning of *pro multis* "will confuse the faithful". Unlike, presumably, the cowardice of Trautman's fellow bishops in the face of homosexual predators.)

Even American anti-traditionalist Jimmy Akin, who in his 1999 pamphlet *Mass Confusion* sought to defend "for all" by charging its opponents with Jansenism, has greeted the Cardinal's move enthusiastically. In the 20 November entry 2006 for his blog [www.jimmyakin.org](http://www.jimmyakin.org), he professed himself "DEE-lighted" with Cardinal Arinze's ruling, which he lauded with the outburst "YEE-HAW!!! ... Kudos to His Awesomeness Cardinal Arinze and His Most Awesomeness B16. Y'all're aces!" Sadly, Akin declares himself interested less in preserving Christ's actual words than in his own favourite blood-sport of traditionalist-bashing: "The simple step of getting rid of the mistranslation will help enormously with anti-rad[ical] trad[itionalism] apologetics."

### Repairing the break

At an incomparably higher level of discourse than Akin's hootenanny verbiage occupies, the late Michael Davies, in Appendix V of his *Pope*  
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# Crusader friar of Habsburg Austria

London barrister and historian **James Bogle** discusses the life and times of a great Catholic: Blessed Mark of Aviano (Marco d'Aviano in the original Italian), who deserves to be much better known in the English-speaking world.

**On 27 April 2003, Pope John Paul II beatified Rev Fr Mark of Aviano OFM Cap (1631-99). The ceremony occurred without any world-wide protest from Muslims, and certainly nothing of the sort that accompanied the considerably more innocuous recent commentary of Pope Benedict XVI at Regensburg.**

Mark of Aviano was a Capuchin friar, born Carlo Domenico, in Aviano in the Republic of Venice. So keen was his zeal that, at the age of sixteen, he went to Crete – where the Venetians were then at war with the Muslim Ottoman Turks – to offer himself to defend the island.

Christendom was in constant danger of being overwhelmed by the Muslim Turks, and the Protestant Reformation had simply weakened the defences. Moreover, Catholic Christendom was fighting, now, on two fronts against both Muslim and Protestant and might, at any time, be swept away altogether. Particular determination, tenacity and courage was needed more than ever from the defenders of Christendom. Fortunately, courage was not lacking.

## Vienna besieged

In September 1529, after defeating the Hungarians at the Battle of Mohács, the Ottoman Turks and their allies laid siege to Vienna – the famous “Siege of Vienna” of 1529. After a tremendous struggle the Austrians, under the seventy-year-old Count Nicholas von Salm, were finally victorious, although Salm himself was killed during the siege.

On 7 October 1571, the Ottoman Turks had seized the opportunity to launch a vast fleet to conquer as much of Christendom as they could. Almost miraculously, they were defeated at Lepanto by the combined Christian fleets under the command of Grand Admiral John of Austria, the illegitimate son of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V.

To this was added the prayers of Christendom since the pope, St Pius V, had ordered a Christendom-wide Rosary prayer campaign for victory. Later, at the “Battle of Vienna” of 1683, King Jan (John) III Sobieski of Poland, also accompanied by Christendom-wide praying of the Rosary, delivered Vienna and Christendom once again from the Ottoman Turks.

Mark of Aviano, knowing the dangers, set out to risk martyrdom at the hands of the Turkish horde. Arriving at a Capuchin convent, he was welcomed by the superior, who, after providing him with food and rest, advised him to return home. But Mark stayed in the convent long enough to be deeply impressed by their way of life and – not least – by their militancy in defending the Christian faith. In 1648, he entered the novitiate of the Capuchins.

This was in the year when the Treaty of Westphalia was signed and ended the bloody and internecine Thirty Years' War. It was the year when the Long Parliament in England passed the *Vote of No Address*, breaking off negotiations with King Charles I and thereby setting the scene for the second phase of the English Civil War.

One year later, Mark professed his

vows. He progressed sufficiently well in the Order that in 1664 he received a licence to preach throughout the Republic of Venice and other Italian states, especially during Advent and Lent. He was also given more responsibility when he was elected superior of the convent of Belluno in 1672, and of the convent of Oderzo in 1674.

## New direction

But it was in 1676 that his life took a sudden new direction. He gave his blessing to a nun who had been bedridden for some thirteen years, whereupon she was healed.

Soon his fame grew widely enough for the Emperor himself – by then Emperor Leopold I – to take note. Leopold met Friar Mark, was soon deeply impressed by him, and effectively made him one of his privy counsellors.

Around this time Mark was also appointed by the Venerable Pope Innocent XI as Apostolic Nuncio and Papal Legate. His status was now complete: he was the personal adviser of the Emperor and of the defending Catholic monarchs.

He turned his attention back to his original aim and desire: the defence of a free Christendom from Islam. A passionate and eloquent preacher, he used his skills to great advantage in keeping and maintaining unity among the Holy League armies of Austria, Poland, Venice, and the Papal States, by now under the leadership of King Jan Sobieski, who was called upon by the Emperor to defend Christendom

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## Mark of Aviano

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from the once more invading Turk.

This time, the Turks came by land.

### “Behold the Cross of the Lord!”

In the decisive Battle of Vienna of 1683, the Holy League armies succeeded in repulsing the invaders. Famously, during the fighting, Friar Mark brandished a crucifix at the Turks, shouting to them “Behold the Cross of the Lord: Flee, enemy bands!”.

From 1683 to 1689 he committed himself to the military campaign, promoting good relations between the various component forces of the Imperial army. He acted as Chaplain-General to the Army exhorting, consoling, ministering to, and leading the soldiers. In this, he mirrored the heroic life of an earlier Franciscan, St John of Capistrano, who had aided the Empire’s Hungarian general, Count Jan Hunyady, in lifting the Turkish siege of Belgrade in the fifteenth century.

Friar Mark’s guidance helped bring about a second liberation of Belgrade. This time, it was in 1688, the year that, in England, the Catholic King James II was being treacherously ousted from his rightful throne by the Protestant revolutionaries.

Not only Protestants, but also the devious and scarcely Catholic King Louis XIV of France, did not hesitate to side with the Turks against the Empire; but Friar Mark and King Jan III overcame all odds. Moreover, Friar Mark, magnanimous in victory, was ever astute in protecting surrendering Muslims and prisoners from retribution. His zeal for the defence of Christendom was fierce, but always tempered by mercy and compassion.

The Ottomans fought on for another sixteen years, losing control of Hungary and Transylvania in the process, before finally giving up. Thus, the Battle of Vienna marks the end of Turkish expansion into Christendom, finalized by the Treaty of Karlowitz.

The combination of the spiritual and the temporal, the religious and the lay, pope and emperor, friar and king, had once again proved the ultimate defence for Catholic Christendom. Not for nothing did Our Lord say, mysteriously, when St Peter showed him two swords, interpreted to mean the lay and the spiritual, “It is enough” (Luke 22:38). Sobieski, no doubt supported by Friar Mark, had entrusted all to the protection of Our Lady of Czestochowa before the battle.

## Significant date

Ironically, for us, the Battle of Vienna took place on a very significant date. It began on 11 September and ended on 12 September, the Vigil and Feast of the Holy Name of Mary, respectively. It thus began on the date that is now known to us as “9/11”, the day of the attack upon the Twin Towers in New York in 2001. The choice was doubtless deliberate on the part of the Muslim terrorists, but they did not reckon with its other resonances.

At Friar Mark’s beatification in 2003, the Pope said that Friar Mark reminds the European continent “that its unity will be more stable if it is based on its common Christian roots.” Other commentators like John Allen, of the *National Catholic Reporter*, feared that the beatification might lead to hostile reaction from Islam. But Italian director Renzo Martinelli, who is making a film based on the life of Mark of Aviano, countered by saying that “without him, Italian women would today be wearing the burqa.”

Legends surround Friar Mark. One says that the croissant was invented in Vienna to celebrate the defeat as a reference to the crescents on the Turkish flags. Austrian-born Marie Antoinette introduced the pastry to France in 1770.

Another legend from Vienna has the first bagel as a gift to King Jan Sobieski, to honour his victory. It was fashioned in the form of a stirrup, to commemorate the victorious charge by the Polish cavalry.

After the battle, the Austrians discovered many bags of coffee in the abandoned Turkish encampment. Using this captured stock, Franciszek Jerzy Kulczycki (a Polish merchant) opened the third coffeehouse in Europe and the first in Vienna, where, according to legend, Kulczycki and Friar Mark added milk and honey to sweeten the



Siege of Vienna

bitter coffee. The result was thereafter termed “cappuccino”, after the brown hood of the Capuchin friar.

### Missions to Islam

Other saints also had a particular mission amongst the Muslims. St John of Matha and St Felix of Valois (of the Royal house of France) founded the Trinitarians for the ransom of Christian captives, and St Peter Nolasco founded the Order of Our Lady of Ransom after our Lady appeared to him in 1218.

Yet foolish commentators would have us believe that the view of the Church has historically been a bloodthirsty one, bent partly upon conquest and partly upon plunder, but only incidentally upon any good. It is a mendacious picture. No cognisance is given of the simple fact that the entirety of Christendom was under constant threat, at short notice, from complete conquest by the invading Ottomans whose janissaries often roamed at will, marauding, upon the hills of Austria and flat plains of Hungary.

The Church’s attitude was not only reasonable and rational, but it was also robust yet merciful, courageous yet compassionate, firm but fair. Moreover, it still remains the only solution to handling the modern threat from

Islamic terrorism and extremism.

This, truly, is the legacy of Blessed Mark of Aviano. No coward, he was ready to defend Christendom with his life, by martyrdom if necessary, but he was also ever-compassionate to the defeated enemy; and, the threat neutralised, he, like St John of Matha, St Felix of Valois and St Peter Nolasco, sought to negotiate diplomatically to find peaceful solutions. Like them, he was ready to redeem captives by personal sacrifice, if necessary, neither shrinking from the duty to defend Christendom nor erring on the side of hatred or disrespect nor unwillingness to parley even with the worst of erstwhile enemies.

### Habsburg gratitude

Not for nothing is Blessed Mark still honoured today in Austria and Venice. He and the whole Capuchin Order were, and are, especially venerated by the Habsburg imperial family, who, from the time of Blessed Mark, took as their personal chaplains the Capuchin friars, and often baptised their children with the name Markus d’Aviano.

Moreover, by imperial rescript, emperors were thereafter buried in the crypt of the Capuchin Church in Vienna. The ceremony was seen once

again at the death of the Empress Zita in 1989.

The great procession halts at the door of the Capuchin church, the coffin carriage guarded by the Tyrolean *Schützenkompanie*, ahead of the guards, hussars, uhlands and lancers, the ranks of the nobility and the throngs of the people of Vienna. The Chamberlain knocks with his staff and the voice of a Capuchin friar calls from within “Who is there?”. The imperial and other titles are read out in full, and the voice says “We do not know her”; again the same reading takes place, but with fewer titles; finally the Chamberlain knocks and says “Zita, a sinful mortal”. The friar replies, “Then we know her!”, and opens the great door to let the procession into the imperial friary Church.

It is a ceremony wholly in keeping with the spirit of Blessed Mark. All the more fitting, then, is the large statue of Blessed Mark of Aviano, outside the Church, holding aloft the crucifix, advancing and calling on all – emperor, king or mere citizen – to yield to the Cross of Christ, the source of all peace, justice, hope and salvation for every man who ever lived or ever shall live.

*Blessed Mark of Aviano, pray for us!*

O

*Pro multis - continued from page 4*

*Paul’s New Mass* (1980), gave a characteristically blunt and unadorned verdict. “To translate *pro multis* as ‘for all men’ represents”, Davies said, “a serious and completely unjustified break with tradition.” (The *Novus Ordo* liturgy itself keeps to the “for many” formulation in its Latin version. Also uncorrupted by “for all”: the Japanese, Polish, and Vietnamese versions.)

Notice that Davies never claimed that “for all” actually invalidated the Mass, that is, prevented transubstantiation from occurring.

This accusation has indeed been made, notably by American-Australian Patrick Omlor; but then Omlor advocates sedevacantism, which Davies most certainly did not. Nevertheless the mere fact that “for all” might raise the possibility of such invalidation forms in itself, one would have supposed, cause to rejoice in its abandonment.

The present article is being written at a time when the Catholic air reverberates with open letters (from France, Italy, Poland, and the English-speaking lands), as well

as with continuing talk of a *motu proprio* from the Holy Father freeing up the traditional Mass. (Some commentators said this *motu proprio* would be issued by Easter 2007, but it was not.) For the moment, however, let us content ourselves with saying that Cardinal Arinze’s decree inspires gratitude; and that, simultaneously, we should not overlook the wider doctrinal and liturgical issues which it leaves untouched.

O

# Amerio in from the cold

The long-standing taboo on official discussion of eminent philosopher Romano Amerio has now ended thanks to a recent review in Rome's Jesuit, and semi-official Vatican, periodical *La Civiltà Cattolica*. **Sandro Magister** reports, *Oriens* comments.

**In *La Civiltà Cattolica*, the magazine of the Rome Jesuits printed with the prior scrutiny and authorisation of the Vatican Secretariat of State, a review has been published (17 March 2007, pp. 622-623) that signals the end of a taboo.**

The taboo is the one that has obliterated from public discussion, for decades, the thought of the Swiss philologist and philosopher Romano Amerio, who died in Lugano in 1997, at the age of ninety-two.

Amerio, although he was always faithful to the Church, condensed his criticisms of it in two volumes: *Iota Unum: Studio delle Variazioni della Chiesa Cattolica nel XX Secolo* [*Iota Unum: A Study of Changes in the Catholic Church in the Twentieth Century*], begun in 1935 and finalised and published in 1985, and, *Stat Veritas: Séguito a Iota Unum* [*Stat Veritas: Sequel to Iota Unum*], released posthumously in 1997, both issued by the publisher Riccardo Ricciardi, of Naples.

The Latin words in the title of the first volume, *Iota Unum*, are those of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount: "... Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter [*iota*] or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place." (Matthew 5: 17-18). The *iota* is the smallest letter of the Greek alphabet.

*Iota Unum*, 658 pages, was reprinted three times in Italy, for a total of seven thousand copies, and was then translated into French, English, Spanish,

Portuguese, German, and Dutch. It thus reached many tens of thousands of readers all over the world.

But in spite of this, an almost complete blacklisting fell upon Amerio in the Church, both during and after his life. The review in *La Civiltà Cattolica* thus signals a turning point. Both because of where and how it was published – with the authorisation of the Holy See – and because of what it says.

Strictly speaking, the review concerns a book about Amerio published in 2005 by his disciple Enrico Maria Radaelli.\* But without a doubt it is the great Swiss thinker who is at the centre of the reviewer's judgements. And the judgements are largely positive, both on "Amerio's intellectual and moral stature," and on "the importance of his philosophical-theological vision for the contemporary Church." The reviewer, Giuseppe Esposito, is a psychologist who is well read in theology. Although he does not agree with Amerio in everything, he maintains that his thought "deserves more extensive discussion," and "without prejudice."

In particular, he writes, "it seems simplistic to relegate his reflection – and that of Radaelli – to the sphere of nostalgic traditionalism, as a position now irrelevant, incapable of comprehending the new movements of the Spirit." On the contrary, the reviewer maintains, Amerio's thought "confers a form and a philosophical framework upon that ecclesial component which, following in the

path of Tradition, reaches out to safeguard Christian specificity and identity." For Amerio, this form and philosophical framework are found in "the primacy of the truth about love." As is well known, the link between truth and love is at the centre of Benedict XVI's teaching.

According to Esposito the "nucleus" of Amerio's thought is

the primacy of truth over love. Subverting this order, and thus producing a "metaphysical dislocation of essences," for Amerio is inevitably translated into an attack against Christ...

The publication of so candid and fair a discussion of Romano Amerio and his work in a magazine like *La Civiltà Cattolica* signals an important shift within theological debate within the Church. Given that Romano Amerio was, among other things, an unflinching critic of official post-Conciliar Roman positions on such issues as ecumenism and religious liberty, the Esposito article signals that it is no longer *verboten* to debate these positions in the light of Catholic tradition.

In short, Rome is saying, *sotto voce*, to critics of some of its most treasured 'orientations' in contemporary teaching and pastoral policy, "We can discuss these things and allow scope to the 'traditionalist' critique".

Now that is really something.

\* Enrico Maria Radaelli, *Romano Amerio: Della Verità e dell'Amore* [Romano Amerio: On Truth and Love], Marco Editore, Lungro di Cosenza, 2005, 340 pp., 25 euros.