

A Response to an Article by Fr. Krenzke

A number of parishioners have asked me questions about an article which appeared in the *Denver Catholic Register* called, “Two Forms – One Roman Rite.” The request to have Fr. Krenzke’s contentions answered is legitimate, so what follows is a critique of what he wrote. I pray that my comments will not be taken as a sign of disrespect of him, or of the Archdiocesan paper. I mean no disrespect, but I do wish to educate my flock about certain points which he made. I’ll not reproduce the whole article, but will take issue with certain of his points in the order he made them. His points will be numbered and in quotes.

1. “When Pope Pius XII continued a reform of the Tridentine Mass initiated earlier by St. Pius X he made it very clear that when the Church returns to the beauty of ancient liturgical forms she does not do so out of a love or nostalgia for antiquity but precisely because there was meaning and spiritual values in these forms.”
 - Father might have some specific quote or quotes in mind, but I cannot find any reference to “nostalgia” in the Pontiff’s works, nor can I find any quotes about “meaning and spiritual values.” I should point out here that “nostalgia” is a Greek word that means “homesickness.” I doubt Pius XII thought that being homesick was a bad thing.
 - What Pope Pius did say about returning to ancient liturgical forms amounts to a series of warnings. For example, “The temerity and daring of those who introduce novel liturgical practices, or call for the revival of obsolete rites out of harmony with prevailing laws and rubrics, deserve severe reproof.” (*Mediator Dei*, #59) And again, “The liturgy of the early ages is most certainly worthy of all veneration. But ancient usage must not be esteemed more suitable and proper, either in its own right or in its significance for later times and new situations, on the simple ground that it carries the savor and aroma of antiquity... Thus, to cite some instances, one would be straying from the straight path were he to wish the altar restored to its primitive table form...” (#62)
2. “Whereas the Tridentine Mass mandated for the whole Church in 1570 by the Council of Trent was formed from several diverse liturgical practices, the new Mass reflects more or less the ancient austere and succinct style of liturgy of the city churches of Rome in the 13th century.”
 - It is not correct to say that the Tridentine Mass was mandated for the whole Church. Entire countries had the option of using it or not.
 - The Council of Trent did not mandate the Mass. That council was completed on December 4, 1563. St. Pius V promulgated the Tridentine Mass in 1570.
 - There is no indication that the Mass in the 13th century was austere and succinct. Rather, the goal of the new Mass was to go back to the primitive liturgy of the early Roman Rite, before the time of St. Gregory the Great.
3. “One of the proofs that we know this is true is that when the Council of Trent reorganized the liturgical rites in 1570 Pope Pius V allowed any group that had consistently used a uniform liturgy for at least 250 years to continue using that rite.”
 - Again, Trent did not reorganize the liturgical rites.
 - St. Pius V was simply following canon law, which stipulated that once custom existed, it could not be abrogated or removed. Custom is established by a practice which continues for 100 years, not 250.
 - The provision of keeping a rite had to do with custom, and not some “group.” So for example, England could keep using the Sarum Rite. England is not a group.
4. “The Dominican order met that criterion since they had used one shortly after their foundation in the 13th century. When our new Mass was proposed for universal usage as the “new order” Roman Rite, the similarity with the Dominican rite was so remarkably similar that the Dominican usage then faded into historic oblivion.”
 - The reason why the Dominican, Carthusian, Carmelite, etc. rites were discontinued, is because they were crushed with an iron fist. The new Mass was not proposed, it was mandated, as opposed to the Tridentine. All the other rites in use in 1570 were Gregorian, stemming from the rite of St. Gregory the Great. Anything Gregorian was deemed by liturgists to be contrary to the “noble simplicity” which was called for in the Second Vatican Council, which is why they had to be eliminated.
 - The Dominican Rite bears little resemblance to the “new order” Roman Rite.
5. “In the period we call the Renaissance... there was a tendency to multiply prayers among other things!”
 - I’m not sure why the exclamation point is there, but I suspect that he thinks that more than one or two prayers is a bad idea.
6. “When a group of Vatican II liturgists came to examine all this in the light of historical studies, the current “new order” came into being. All the changes envisioned were carefully submitted to Pope Paul VI for his study and approval.”
 - One of those liturgists, Fr. Louis Bouyer, later realized that, “The problem with historical/scientific liturgical study, is that it is never historical/scientific enough.” I spoke at length to Fr. Bouyer in 1983, and he strongly rejected the work of the Consilium (the committee he was on to formulate the changes).
 - He said that often there was a deep stack of changes which would be brought to Paul VI, and placed on his desk (There could be up to 40 major changes regarding say, the liturgical calendar, for a single day of work). When the pope would object, the change proposed was simply reformulated, and submitted again in another stack on another day a few weeks later. Archbishop Annibale Bugnini (who was spearheading these changes), using another tactic, would go to the committee working on the change, and say that the pope wanted it. The committee would agree to the change, since the pope wanted it. Then Bugnini would present a signed copy of the change proposed to the pope, and say that the committee wanted it. And thus the pope would often sign the change, thinking this was desired by the experts, who were only following the “historical” evidence.