

Interview with Fr. Jackson on His Book—Part II

Pontificum. What is your take on the reception of this document?

I can't say what things are like in other countries, but in the US, the *Motu Proprio* was received very well by a small number of younger lay Catholics and clergy and religious; was ignored by most Catholics since many still have no idea what the traditional Mass is; and received quite poorly by a small number of older Catholics who are angry about the development.

A young priest, 29 years of age, wrote this recently in a publication: "This young generation does not know anything about the tradition of the Church, about her music, art, architecture, devotions, or saints. When we do encounter them, we do not always think, 'This is old.' In fact, we often think, 'This is new. I had no idea that this existed.' This discovery should be a cause of joy for us, that the Church is always young, finding awe and wonder in places that we would not have expected, or that we ourselves have discounted." I think he is right on each point, and this bodes well for the future. They have no baggage from older times, and are quite open to tradition in all its aspects.

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by Aurelio Porfiri

What is the root of division?

I think it best to think of roots. The *lex vivendi* (the law of how to live) is damaged by bad culture, which results from the lack of fidelity to the *lex credendi* (the law of belief). The main reason the *lex credendi* is so damaged is the state of the *lex orandi* (the law of prayer). There is an order to these causes; if we do not worship well, then we don't believe well, and if we don't believe well (error and heresy), then we will not live well.

This passage of your book may sound horribly in the ears of reformers: "Thirdly, at the heart of participation is union with Christ the Priest at the altar, and this union is especially interior, just like that of His Mother and St John standing at the foot of the Cross. They gave Our Lord their attention, devotion, sympathy, time and everything else they could give Him while He was on the cross, but did so silently. That is participation. It is the essence of participation, and it is primarily interior. So although praying the Rosary during the Mass is a very low form of participation – and a form that appeals to very few – Pius XII made it clear that it is not to be condemned, since it is quite possible to be in union with Christ through the Rosary." Can you expand on that?

Practically speaking, the Rosary may be all some people are capable of doing at

Mass. If you just came from some traumatic experience, you might need something quite physical to do with your hands while trying to pray.

The Mass is a prayer, and if prayer is seen in its true light, it will appear as a line of communication which we must keep open between ourselves and God. It is a channel through which our love flows to God and God's love back to us, but love is often beyond our capacity to put into words. The wordlessness of love is a regular occurrence between lovers. So, in the Rite of St. Gregory on the whole, there is no over-emphasis or over-reliance upon words. The words are there, but so are much silence, and the thought that someone must be talking or singing the whole time is foreign to the old Mass, and foreign to love.

Our Lord said as much. "And when you are praying, speak not much, as the heathens. For they think that in their much speaking they may be heard" (Mt 6:7). Our good Lord was not saying that long prayers are bad, or prayers with many words; He is simply emphasizing that our minds and our hearts, rather than the tongue and the mouth are the basic organs of prayer. And we should often recall that one single moment in which we have thought of God exclusively; thought of Him with love and gratitude; thought of Him with submissiveness to His will or with repentance for our sins; one such moment is likely far more pleasing to God than our many words.

We are 10 years from the promulgation of the *Motu Proprio Summorum*