

# Paix Liturgique

## New Exclusive Survey: Is the UK the Future of C

Letter 8 - 5 September 2010

The Holy Father will be paying an apostolic visit to Scotland and England from the 16 to the 19 September. He will be coming for the beatification of Cardinal Newman, the Anglican theologian priest who converted to Catholicism. Our movement has seized the occasion of this much-awaited trip across the channel: we have commissioned a new survey on the Motu Proprio's reception among British Catholics along the lines of the survey conducted during the Holy Father's recent trip to Portugal.

### I – A PECULIAR CONTEXT

Ever since the sixteenth-century Anglican schism, Catholicism has had a peculiar position in Great Britain. The Church was institutionally oppressed down to the nineteenth century; indeed both the authorities and the people considered Catholicism to be antinational.

The Catholic Relief Act of 1829 allowed Catholicism to organise freely, particularly once the 1850 Pontifical Brief re-established the Catholic hierarchy in the country. Since that time, in which Cardinal Newman lived, British Catholicism has had a remarkable influence in the island's intellectual and cultural circles. Such singular figures as Chesterton and Tolkien emerged from this influence; it did not, however, bring about a massive return of Anglicans to Rome.

The first important act in defence of the traditional liturgy came from England in 1971: a petition signed by dozens of personalities, among whom Agatha Christie (though not herself a Catholic). This action was rewarded by the immediate grant of an indult, commonly called the "Agatha Christie indult," whose unabridged text we are publishing in appendix. **This indult, which was formulated in the classic form of an answer of the Congregation for Divine Liturgy to the Cardinal President of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, provided for the possibility of "certain groups of the faithful on specific occasions be allowed to participate in the Mass celebrated according to the rites and texts of the former Roman Missal."**

Despite this text's importance for the history of the defence of the Church's traditional liturgy (it established a precedent, which is very important in the Roman curia's modus operandi, and it would be constantly cited in the context of the 1988 Motu Proprio), the dearth of eagerness in its application on the part of the British Episcopal hierarchy (already in 1971 . . .) deprived it of any fruit. Consequently the situation of English, Welsh, and Scottish Catholics attached to the traditional liturgy has ended up being closer and closer to that known on the continent: disdain and marginalization.

The 2007 Motu Proprio has not yet reversed the situation, despite some overtures on the part of certain British prelates and the activity of lay movements, among whom the Latin Mass Society holds the first rank. It has organised many formation seminars for priests to learn how to celebrate the extraordinary form.

Yet some effervescence has been observed at the approach of the pontifical visit. It has been fed in part by the Apostolic Constitution Anglicanorum Coetibus setting up personal Ordinariates for Anglicans who enter into full communion with the Church. Indeed this text, a new fruit of Benedict XVI's generosity, offers some hope to those Anglican faithful who no longer recognise themselves in the recent evolution of the Anglican Communion as it keeps caving in to pressure on the matter of women's ordination and the admission of active homosexuals to "holy orders." Until then it has seemed to be the Protestant community that was the closest to Rome. Furthermore, **the Sovereign Pontiff is constantly under attack from many pressure groups that have access to the English media and do not shrink from utterly shameless provocations**; there is even talk of sending the Pope to gaol! It is within this context that Paix Liturgique wished to measure what Catholics in Great Britain know about the Motu Proprio Summorum Pontificum and how they react to it.

## II – THE RESULTS

**Here are this survey's results. It was conducted on line, 21-28 June 2010, by Harris Interactive. There were 800 British Catholic participants, from a sampling of 6153 persons over the age of 18.**

*Question #1: Do you attend Mass?*

Weekly: 24.3%

Monthly: 7.8%

On Holy Days: 10.1%

Occasionally (e.g. for weddings): 45.6%

Never: 12.3%

*Question #2: In July Pope Benedict XVI restated that the Mass could be celebrated both in its modern, "ordinary," or "Paul VI" form--i.e. in English, with the priest facing the faithful, communion received standing--and in its traditional, "extraordinary," or "John XXIII" form--i.e. in Latin and Gregorian chant, with the priest turned towards the altar, communion received kneeling. Were you aware of this?*

Yes: 39.4%

No: 60.6%

*Question #3: Would you consider it normal or abnormal for both liturgical forms to be celebrated regularly in YOUR parish?*

Normal: 44.9%

Abnormal: 21%

No opinion: 34.1%

*Question #4: If Mass were celebrated with Latin and Gregorian chant in its extraordinary form in YOUR parish, without taking the place of the ordinary one in English, would you attend it?*

The following answers are from all Catholics polled:

- 15.6% would attend every week

- 10.8% once a month

- 11.1% for Holy Days

- 46.1% occasionally

- 16.4% never

Answers from those regularly practicing (weekly and monthly) alone:

- 43% would attend every week

- 23.4% once a month

- 7.8% for Holy Days

- 17.6% occasionally

- 8.2% never

### III - PAIX LITURGIQUE'S COMMENTS

1/ The first lesson to draw from this survey, and good news for the entire Church too, is that 32% of British Catholics claim to attend Mass at least once a month. This reported rate of practice is far superior to that in old Catholic countries such as France or Portugal (both at 19% according to the December 2009 IFOP survey for La Croix and the May 2010 Harris Interactive poll for PL respectively).

2/ The second lesson is that this survey, which was conducted by a professional and independent institution, confirms all earlier polls conducted in different places and at different times on the question of the Church's traditional liturgy (see [here](#)). Let those that have eyes see; and those that have ears, hear. . . .

In Great Britain as everywhere else, a strong proportion of Catholics would gladly attend the extraordinary form of the Roman rite if it took place right in THEIR OWN parish. The only difference is that the proportion is higher than the average obtained during the preceding surveys where about one third of regularly practicing Catholics would gladly attend the traditional Mass if it were celebrated in their parish. **In Great Britain, 43% of those who go to Mass every week would attend the traditional Mass if it were celebrated in their parish (Great Britain outstrips Italy which until now held the record of 40% of weekly Mass goers answering that they would go to the traditional Mass every week if it were offered).** The result even reaches 66.4% (i.e. 2 out of 3 if one lumps together all those who attend Mass at least once a month, which is even more than in Italy (63% according to the 2009 Doxa survey).

When one notes (see question 2) that 60% of Catholics are not aware of the Motu Proprio's existence, one can easily imagine that the aforementioned 66.4% of Mass goers would increase if awareness of the MP were spread more broadly. . . .

3/ This study's third lesson is the confirmation that in Great Britain too the overwhelming majority of the faithful find it absolutely normal for both forms of the Roman rite to cohabit in the parish setting.

This is not entirely surprising: British Catholics, long persecuted as "Papists," are indeed particularly attached to the successor of Peter. In Great Britain as elsewhere, the wish of the faithful to see the Motu Proprio being applied seems in direct proportion to the opposition that the Pope's texts elicit among most bishops. The hierarchy's lack of awareness of the reality before it, brought out by this study, is noteworthy.

Only 21% of the Faithful find the peaceful coexistence of both forms of the Roman rite abnormal. This figure might be lower if more of the Faithful (i.e. more than the current 39.4%) knew the provisions in Benedict XVI's Motu Proprio. One can legitimately think that, among these 21% there are some who believe what has been repeated to them for so long, namely that this liturgy has been "abrogated," if not "forbidden" . . . .

In Great Britain as elsewhere, the argument resting on the lack of interest among the Faithful for the application of the Motu Proprio is unfair. When their point of view is solicited in an opinion poll, the results are quite different to those obtained when one merely speaks in their name . . . all the while taking care not to consult them, unless it's through parish councils, which as a matter of principle (whether because of ideology, fear, or simple post-conciliar conservatism) are not inclined to favour the reform of the reform undertaken by Benedict XVI.

4/ Regarding the Agatha Christie Indult: from 1971 on it allowed the celebration of the 1965 Missal with the modifications of 1967 (as opposed to that of the 1962 Missal allowed in Summorum Pontificum and, before that, in Ecclesia Dei). One might have thought that this watered-down an

modernised form of the John XXIII missal would have been more acceptable to the bishops of Britain and that it would therefore have helped spread a more traditional liturgy in the post-conciliar context . . . . But such was not the case as the British bishops perceived no substantial difference between the 1965 liturgy and that of 1962. It is of course needless to press this point with too much insistence upon those who naively reckon that the celebration of the 1965 form would be more acceptable at the diocesan level than the 1962 form. There is likewise no need to mention the naïveté which is in this case abysmal, of the few militants who are dead set on the celebration of the Paul VI liturgy in Latin . . . .

5/ Above all this new survey underscores the (in this case British) bishops' astounding deficiency—to put the best face on it—when it comes to communication. Indeed, a full three years after the publication of the *Motu Proprio* on 7 July 2007, only 40% have been informed of it. In fact one must call a spade a spade, particularly in so serious a matter as liturgical and sacramental life: in Britain as elsewhere, the issue is pastoral blindness to the expectations of the Faithful. This blindness on the part of bishops has once again been scientifically measured and put into figures. It is tempting to wonder whether the bishops might not need a new pastoral Council entirely dedicated to listening skills for the benefit of the “Silent ones of the Church,” and to meeting their expectations.

6/ One final remark: because of the small proportion of Catholics in the country (13%), it was necessary to poll more people than usual (6153 individuals) in order to work with a representative number of people who declare themselves to be “Catholic.” Consequently this survey is the costliest of all those we have commissioned to date. It cost €10,000 with tax. If you wish to participate in financing it and thus allow us to continue our work of information, you can post your donation to *Paix liturgique, 1 allée du Bois Gougenot, 78290 CROISSY-SUR-SEINE (write out the cheque to Paix liturgique), or you can transfer funds: IBAN : FR76 3000 3021 9700 0500 0158 593 - BIC SOGEFRPP.*

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## **APPENDIX: The 1971 Agatha Christie Indult**

*A) The 1971 petition by distinguished writers, scholars, artists, and historians living in England to spare the traditional Latin Mass: (source: <http://www.latin-mass-society.org>)*

If some senseless decree were to order the total or partial destruction of basilicas or cathedrals, the obviously it would be the educated - whatever their personal beliefs - who would rise up in horror to oppose such a possibility. Now the fact is that basilicas and cathedrals were built so as to celebrate a rite which, until a few months ago, constituted a living tradition. We are referring to the Roman Catholic Mass. Yet, according to the latest information in Rome, there is a plan to obliterate the Mass by the end of the current year.

One of the axioms of contemporary publicity, religious as well as secular, is that modern man in general, and intellectuals in particular, have become intolerant of all forms of tradition and are anxious to suppress them and put something else in their place. But, like many other affirmations of our publicity machines, this axiom is false. Today, as in times gone by, educated people are in the vanguard where recognition of the value of tradition is concerned, and are the first to raise the alarm when it is threatened. We are not at this moment considering the religious or spiritual experience of millions of individuals.

The rite in question, in its magnificent Latin text, has also inspired a host of priceless achievements in the arts - not only mystical works, but works by poets, philosophers, musicians, architects, painters and sculptors in all countries and epochs. Thus, it belongs to universal culture as well as to churchmen and formal Christians. In the materialistic and technocratic civilisation that is increasingly threatening the life of mind and spirit in its original creative expression - the word - i

seems particularly inhuman to deprive man of word-forms in one of their most grandios manifestations.

The signatories of this appeal, which is entirely ecumenical and non-political, have been drawn from every branch of modern culture in Europe and elsewhere. They wish to call to the attention of the Holy See, the appalling responsibility it would incur in the history of the human spirit were it to refuse to allow the Traditional Mass to survive, even though this survival took place side by side with other liturgical reforms.

*Signed: Harold Acton, Vladimir Ashkenazy, John Bayler, Lennox Berkeley, Maurice Bowra, Agatha Christie, Kenneth Clark, Nevill Coghill, Cyril Connolly, Colin Davis, Hugh Delargy, +Robert Exeter, Miles Fitzalan-Howard, Constantine Fitzgibbon, William Glock, Magdalen Gofflin, Robert Graves, Graham Greene, Ian Greenless, Joseph Grimond, Harman Grisewood, Colin Hardie, Rupert Hart-Davis, Barbara Hepworth, Auberon Herbert, John Jolliffe, David Jones, Osbert Lancaster, F.R. Leavis, Cecil Day Lewis, Compton Mackenzie, George Malcolm, Max Mallowan, Alfred Marnau, Yehudi Menuhin, Nancy Mitford, Raymond Mortimer, Malcolm Muggeridge, Iri Murdoch, John Murray, Sean O'Faolain, E.J. Oliver, Oxford and Asquith, William Plomer, Kathlee Raine, William Rees-Mogg, Ralph Richardson, +John Ripon, Charles Russell, Rivers Scott, Joan Sutherland, Philip Toynbee, Martin Turnell, Bernard Wall, Patrick Wall, E.I. Watkin, R.C. Zaehner.*

#### *B) The answer from Rome:*

The petition was communicated to the Pope by Cardinal Heenan, Archbishop of Westminster. Paul VI's favourable answer is therefore addressed to him. In one of history's ironies, the letter bears the signature of Mgr Bugnini, the very man who shaped the liturgical reform and tirelessly fought against the ancient liturgy.

#### SACRA CONGREGATIO PRO CULTU DIVINO

E Civitate Vaticana, die 5 November 1971

Prot. N. 1897/71

*Your Eminence,*

*His Holiness Pope Paul VI, by letter of 30 October 1971, has given special faculties to the undersigned Secretary of this Sacred Congregation to convey to Your Eminence, as Chairman of the Episcopal Conference of England and Wales, the following points regarding the Order of the Mass:*

*1. Considering the pastoral needs referred to by Your Eminence, it is permitted to the local Ordinaries of England and Wales to grant that certain groups of the faithful may on special occasions be allowed to participate in the Mass celebrated according to the Rites and texts of the former Roman Missal. The edition of the Missal to be used on these occasions should be the published again by the Decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites (27 January 1965), and with the modifications indicated in the *Instructio altera* (4 May 1967).*

*This faculty may be granted provided that groups make the request for reasons of genuine devotion and provided that the permission does not disturb or damage the general communion of the faithful. For this reason the permission is limited to certain groups on special occasions; at all regular parish and other community Masses, the Order of the Mass given in the new Roman Missal should be used. Since the Eucharist is the sacrament of unity, it is necessary that the use of the Order of Mass given in the former Missal should not become a sign or cause of disunity in the Catholic community. For this reason agreement among the Bishops of the Episcopal Conference as to how this faculty is to be exercised will be a further guarantee of unity of praxis in this area.*

*2. Priests who on occasion wish to celebrate Mass according to the above-mentioned edition of the Roman Missal may do so by consent of their Ordinary and in accordance with the norms given by the same. When these priests celebrate Mass with the people and wish to use the rites and texts of the former Missal, the conditions and limits mentioned above for celebration by certain groups on special occasions are to be applied.*

*With my highest respects, I am Yours sincerely in Christ,*

(Signed:) A. Bugnini

Secretary Sacra Congregatio pro Cultu Divino