

The Destruction of the Christian Tradition (Part 4)

by

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The Other Sacraments

We have, to this point, discussed in some detail the issue of the Mass, and the changes imposed by or in the name of Vatican II.¹ It would be surprising if the “attack on tradition” was limited to this sacrament alone. The other sacraments are similarly undermined, if indeed, not nullified. In marriage, the vow of obedience has been deleted despite the fact that it is Scriptural in preceptual origin. In fact, the individuals contracting the marriage are now allowed to create their own service. An excellent example of this is described in Malachy Martin’s book, *Hostage to the Devil* (Reader’s Digest Books, 1977). In many instances this leads to invalid marriages and sacrilegious ceremonies. As to divorce, the post-conciliar Church has gotten around Christ’s injunction by allowing “annulments” practically for the asking. During the last year, of 640 requests before the Brooklyn Marriage Court, 640 were granted. One of the grounds for granting annulments is “psychological immaturity”. Now, I ask you, who cannot claim to have been psychologically immature at the time of his (her) marriage? And who but a saint is psychologically completely mature?

As to the other Sacraments, let me quote Michael Davies. “The modifications made in the rite of ordination are, if anything, more serious than those made in the Mass”. Archbishop Lefebvre has stated that the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Post-conciliar Church is “of doubtful validity”. We cannot discuss in detail all these changes but will present those made in the Sacrament of “Extreme Unction” as a brief study of “anti-traditional methodology”. This Sacrament, given to those in danger of death, has certain specific functions. Like all the Sacraments, it was instituted by Christ as a “visible” sign and vehicle of grace. Let us consider its purpose.

The effects of Extreme Unction are as varied as they are potent. As to its “end” or “purpose”, it is “the perfect healing of the soul”—and it surely has the inherent power to attain its end in those who pose no obstacle to the grace it conveys. As the Council of Trent explains it, “this effect is the grace of the Holy Ghost, Whose unction blots out sins.² if any remain to be expiated, and the consequences of sin, and alleviates and strengthens the soul of the sick person, by exciting in him a great confidence in the divine mercy, sustained by which he bears more

lightly the troubles and sufferings of disease, and more easily resists the temptations of the demon lying in wait for his heel;³ and sometimes, when it is expedient for the soul's salvation, recovers bodily health." These effects are usually grouped under four headings.

Its first effect is the *Remission of Sins* which follows from the passage in St. James: "If anyone be in a state of sin, his sins are forgiven him", and such is indeed confirmed by the very "form" of the Sacrament *Indulgent tibi Dominus...quidquid...delquisti.* (May God pardon thee whatever sins thou has committed...) Of course, it is true that mortal sins are forgiven by Confession, Absolution and Penance—but it is not unusual that a sick man cannot confess; yet providing he places no obstacle to the infusion of Grace into his soul through this Sacrament, even if he cannot confess, he is still washed clean of sin and regains his Baptismal purity. To such an individual Extreme Unction becomes the pillar of salvation. It can be argued that conditional Absolution obviates the need for this final Sacrament, but it has yet other effects.

Secondly, this Sacrament remits temporal punishment due to us for our sins. It was, as Father Kilker says, "Instituted for the perfect healing of the soul with a view to its immediate entrance into glory, unless indeed the all-knowing Master of Life and Death should deem the restoration of bodily health more expedient. Consequently, it must accomplish the removal of all disabilities, it must render us fit to enter our heavenly home without delay. Were this not so, it would be absurd to say that the Sacrament is *consummativum spiritualis curationis*".⁴ This doctrine must not however be construed to mean that infallibly the remission of the entire temporal debt occurs when Extreme Unction is received. Often the subject blocks the completeness of the effect by defective and impeding dispositions. But, if the subject has in every way the correct disposition and devotion, it must be conceded that he receives the *plenissimam poenarum relaxationem*—the complete remission of temporal punishment.

A third and terribly important effect is what is called the *confortatio animae*: or the "Comforting of the Soul". The approach of death with its distressing pains, its physical prostration and the associated mental disquietude, can truly be a most appalling experience. Man dreads few things as much as this "moment of truth". He reviews his past actions, and, as it says in the Book of Wisdom, "*They shall come with fear at the thought of their sins, and their iniquities shall stand against them to convict them.*" At the same time he recognizes that soon he must stand before the judgment seat of God. It is precisely at this time that the Devil uses all his powers to attack the soul. As the Catechism of the Council of Trent puts it: "Although the enemy of the human race never ceases, while we live, to meditate our ruin and destruction, yet at no time does he more violently use every effort utterly to destroy us, and if possible, to deprive us of all hope of divine mercy, than when he sees the last day of life approach." Now the third effect of this Sacrament is "to free the minds of the faithful from this solicitude, and to fill the soul with pious and holy joy". It further provides "arms and strength...to the faithful...to enable them to break the violence and impetuosity of the adversary, and to fight bravely against him...."

Who of us can be so presumptuous as not ardently to desire such assistance?

Fourthly, it is a doctrine of our faith that one of the effects of the Extreme Unction is the restoration of bodily health, if recovery is expedient for the soul's welfare.

Lastly, though not strictly speaking a theological effect, the administration of the Sacrament under traditional circumstances, made it perfectly plain to the individual concerned that he was facing death. He could no longer hide from himself the reality of his situation. He was forced, as it were, to the battlefield, and not allowed to drift away in some gentle morphinized dream that "everything was going to be all right".⁵ And how often did physicians and relatives see the wonderful effects this Sacrament worked upon the souls of those who received it—turning as it were, their last moments on earth into a foretaste of that heavenly peace and glory that is potentially offered to every soul.

It is a teaching of the Church that for a Sacrament to be valid, several prerequisites are necessary. These are usually listed as Matter, Form, Minister, Subject and Intention. Since the subject here is obviously the (Catholic) individual who is in danger of death, and the minister is presumably a valid priest with the appropriate intention, it behooves us to consider in turn both the "matter" and the "form". If the changes introduced by the New and Post-conciliar Church, in their so-called "Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick", attack the integrity of the "matter", and the substance of the "form", then the Sacrament is rendered invalid and none of the important effects mentioned above can occur. Let us first of all consider "matter".

According to Kilker, "The remote matter of Extreme Unction is oil of olives. This the Council of Trent definitely defined: *Intellexit enim Ecclesia materiam esse oleum ab episcopo benedictum*. There has been no doubt that the oil meant by St. James is the oil of olives". In the Latin Church it has ever been the custom to employ pure unadulterated olive oil. In some Eastern rites the practice of adding a little water as a symbol of Baptism, or of a little wine in memory of the Good Samaritan, or even of the dust of the sepulcher of some saint, has long been in vogue.

Now this oil is blessed by the Bishop at the magnificent Mass of Maundy Thursday in Holy Week—a Mass so sacred that the Bishop is attended by twelve priests and seven Deacons and seven Sub-deacons in order to say it properly. It is then distributed to all the pastors in his diocese for administration by the clergy. In the Latin Church this has been an episcopal prerogative since at least the second Council of Carthage (A.D. 390). Such has always been the tradition of the Church, though it is to be admitted that the privilege is "jurisdictional", and not "episcopal" in nature, and that some Popes (very few) have allowed priests the "faculty" for giving the blessing (according to the same ritual), and that in the Eastern Church, priests routinely have this privilege. Be this as it may, according to the Council of Florence, and most specifically, according to the Catechism of the Council of Trent, it is *oleum olivae per episcopum benedictum* ("olive oil blessed by the Bishop"). The rite to be observed in this blessing is to be found in the *Pontificale* under the title *De officio in Feria V Coenae Domini*. While too lengthy to give in full, it starts out with the following phrase: *Emitte, quaesumus, Spiritum tuum sanctum Paraclitum de caelis in hanc pinguidinem olei...* ("Send forth, we pray, your Holy Spirit, the

Paraclete from heaven into this rich substance of oil...”). For Catholics the remote matter of Extreme Unction is oil of olives; the proximate matter is “the anointing with oil”. Should a parish priest ever be given the faculty of blessing the oil, it would be with the understanding that he used the traditional rites for doing it.

What then is this “matter” in the New Church? According to the “Rite of Anointing and Pastoral Care of the Sick” promulgated by Paul VI’s Apostolic Constitution of November 30, 1972, olive oil need no longer be used. Any oil of plant origin can be blessed—and pray, what oil is ultimately not of plant origin? Axle-grease, Vaseline and Mazola oil can satisfy the requirement. Further, the oil can be blessed by any priest who has the “faculty”, and this faculty has been extended by the “Bishop’s Committee on the Liturgy” to any priest “where didactic or catechetical reasons prompt it”. The blessing has of course been changed. No longer is the Holy Spirit invoked, but rather, it now reads: “May your blessing come upon all who are anointed with this oil, that they may be freed from pain and illness and made well again in body and mind and soul.” Notice that the emphasis is now entirely upon the healing of illness, and not on the forgiveness of sins. Chrism is now an ersatz oil with an ersatz blessing.

Let us now consider the “Form” of the Sacrament, or the words the priest uses when anointing the patient “in danger of death”. The traditional words are: *Per istam sanctam unctionem et suam piissimam misericordiam, indulgeat tibi Dominus quidquid per...deliquisti* (“Through this Holy Unction (oil), and through the great goodness of His mercy, may God pardon thee whatever sins thou hast committed [by the evil use of sight—smell, touch, etc.—depending on the organ anointed”].) Needless to say, this also has been changed by the Post-conciliar Church to *Per istam sanctam unctionem et suam piissimam misericordiam adiuvet te Dominus gratia Spiritus Sancti, ut a peccatis liberatum te salvat atque propitiis alleviat*. The semi-official translation given out through the Holy See Press Office is: “Through this holy anointing and his most loving mercy, may the Lord assist you by the grace of the Holy Spirit, so that when you have been freed from your sins, he may save you and in his goodness raise you up.” Another translation taken from Father C. J. Keating’s article is closer to the original: “Through this holy anointing and his great love for you, may the Lord who freed you from sin, heal you and extend his saving grace to you....”⁶ Nowhere are the “essential” words *indulgeat tibi Dominus* used.

Has the Church the right to change the matter and the form of her Sacraments? The answer is given by Pope Leo XIII’s *Apostolicae Curiae* from which we take the following quotes:

The Church is forbidden to change, or even touch, the matter or form of any sacrament. She may indeed change or abolish or introduce something in the non-essential rites or ‘ceremonial’ parts used in the administration of the sacraments, such as processions, prayers or hymns before or after the actual words of the form are recited.... All know that the sacraments of the New Law, as sensible and

efficient signs of invisible grace, ought both to signify the grace which they effect, and effect the grace which they signify....

There is no question but that the New and Post-conciliar “form” violates the canons of the ecumenical councils, the ecclesiastical traditions, the teaching of the Catechism of the Council of Trent, and the constant teachings of the Popes as enshrined in the above quotation. What however must be questioned is whether this New form is rendered invalid by the changes. Is the change, as the theologians would say, “substantial”? To answer this question, we must know what in the traditional form was considered “essential” for efficacy. The answer is almost unanimous among the theologians —the phrase *indulgeat tibi Dominus* (“may God pardon thee”) is the very minimum that must be present. Most insist upon *quidquid deliquisti* and *sanctum unctionem*. After all, as Leo XIII said, “the sacraments...ought...to signify the grace which they effect”, and in the present situation, this is the health of the soul which is effected by strengthening of the soul through grace and by the remission of sin and the punishment due to sin. As St. Thomas Aquinas says, “Extreme Unction is a Spiritual remedy, since it avails for the remission of sins....” (*Summa*, III, Suppl 29, 1). Now, the New Form OMITS these critical words, and only asks that God “heal” one. While it is to be admitted that throughout history several valid forms have been in use—since the Council of Florence the form has been fixed. If some of these forms have used the word “*parcat*”, “*remittat*”, or even “*sanat*” in place of “*indulgeat*”, this does not interfere with validity. (In the traditional form, replacing the word “pardon” by “spare”, “remit” or “heal”—but always with regard to “whatever sins thou hast committed”) To OMIT this phrase entirely is to remove from the “form” its ability to absolve—to change its “meaning”, and hence to make a change of such a *substantial* nature as almost certainly to render it totally invalid. Even if the “blessing” is preceded by a valid absolution —which in many cases is questionable, one is deprived of the other sacramental effects that are so important.⁷

Clearly then, if the Post-conciliar “blessing” (and it is nothing more) is upon the sick, the ersatz sacrament should no longer be limited to those in “danger of death”. Twice during the Second Vatican Council the Fathers rejected suggestions that the requirement of “danger of death” for the reception of the Anointing be omitted. As Father Keating points out, however, “the new rite does what the Council was not able to do”. In contrast to the negative wording of Canon 940 which states “Extreme Unction is not able to be offered except to the faithful who, having attained the use of reason, fall into the danger of death from illness or old age”, the new rite can be administered to those who are ill, but in no danger of death whatsoever. Further, it states in the Constitution on the Liturgy (Vatican II) that “it is to be stressed that whenever rites, according to their specific nature, make provision for communal celebration involving the presence and active participation of the faithful, this way of celebrating them is preferred, as far as possible, to a celebration that is individual and quasi-private”. Thus we see that officially, this new ersatz sacrament can be given communally. Indeed, in my erstwhile parish, it was the

custom to gather all the mildly infirm and aged together—the arthritics, the elderly and the infirm—and to bestow this “blessing” upon them (with no preceding “Penance” or “absolution”—to be followed by coffee and cake in the rectory!

Now any Catholic who still believes in Sacramental “efficacy”, must surely hold that certain pre-requisites are also necessary for “validity”. (If not, then any words can be used, and any individual can say them). Validity in turn demands a certain integrity in “matter” and “form”, and hence it is our right to have this integrity retained by any Church that claims to be founded by Christ and the Apostles. No traditional Catholic admitted “in extremis” to the emergency room of a Hospital, and asking for a priest, would settle for a Baptist minister—even if he should say the proper words of the form. Yet in fact, of what more use is a priest who uses an incorrect and invalid form? One must further express great wonderment at the new breed of priest who feels at home with this kind of “playing fast and free” with what is so sacred. The bestowal of Extreme Unction must be one of the paramount and most satisfying features of a priest’s career, and something further that he is bound both in charity and *ex justitia* to do. What is one to say of a Church that would foist such a “parody” upon its faithful at the time of death.

The Sacraments relate to one of the essential functions of the Church. Without them, one aspect of her holiness is attacked. If we are to remove the Sacraments and to destroy the validity of the priesthood, then what is the function of the Church? Even a Moslem can validly baptize us (if he uses the correct “form” and “matter”, and has the proper intention). As for the New Church, if her doctrine is defective, and her sacraments invalid, then what function does she serve? In what way does she differ from, say, the Presbyterians, or, “The Ethical Culture Society”? In all honesty, the answer is none!

Notes

¹ In view of the fact that the conciliar Church may at some time allow for her “priests” to say the traditional Mass in an attempt to win back or retain the “conservative” element, the following comment by a theologian and seminary professor of the Society of Pius X is pertinent. It is in the form of an answer to a query.

Dear Father,

A priest in our area has just begun to say the traditional Latin Mass. The only problem is that he was ordained in the early 1970’s. Can I attend his Masses if he was ordained in the new way? T. D., Maryland.

Dear T.D.,

Since the new rite of ordination was imposed in 1968, we must assume that the priest was ordained according to the new rite rather than with the traditional Catholic ceremony. In any

case, you could ask him—for his sake as well as your own. If he understands enough to reject the new Mass, he should certainly be concerned about the validity of his priestly orders.

If he was indeed ordained in the new way, then no true Catholic may attend the Masses he offers, even though they are traditional. The reason is that there are very serious doubts about the validity of the new ordination ceremony.

The first difficulty is found in the new rite itself. Although the new rite keeps the necessary words of ordination (decreed by Pope Pius XII in 1947), nevertheless, in the context of the new rite, these words can-not be understood in the Catholic sense. The priesthood exists for the sacrifice. Thus the Catholic priesthood exists for the true Catholic Mass, which is the unbloody sacrifice of Calvary. But the new priest-hood exists for the new Mass, which is not the unbloody sacrifice of Calvary.

According to the new rite of ordination, a priest is ordained to offer only a sacrifice of “praise and thanksgiving”, which is the new Mass; the new ceremony has suppressed all mention of the sacrifice in reparation for sin. The sacrifice of Calvary, however, was offered to God the Father in adoration, reparation, thanksgiving and supplication. A “mass” which purposely excludes any one of these four ends cannot be the same as the sacrifice of Calvary, and thus is no Catholic Mass at all. And a priest ordained for such a mere “sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving” is very doubtfully a Catholic priest at all. It is of interest to refer to the Council of Trent in this regard, for the Council explicitly condemned any attempt to make of the Mass nothing but a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving by denying its reparatory value : “If anyone says that the Sacrifice of the Mass is merely an offering of praise and thanksgiving, or that it is a simple memorial of the sacrifice offered on the cross, not propitiatory...let him be anathema!” (session 22, canon 3 on the Holy Eucharist). Because the new rites of ordination and the Mass do just this, they are not Catholic rites at all.

A further reason to question the validity of orders given by the new rite involves the intention of the man to be ordained. Did he really want to become a Catholic priest? Did he even understand what the Catholic priesthood is? These are fair questions today, when the instructions given in nominally Catholic seminaries are both anti-Catholic and anti-clerical. Even if the ordained had the necessary intention, what of the ordaining bishop? Did the bishop intend to ordain a true Catholic priest or merely a “president of the assembly”? In his encyclical *Apostolicæ curæ*, Pope Leo XIII explains that the intention of the bishop in such cases must be interpreted according to the ceremony which he uses. If he uses a Catholic ceremony, then the presumption is always in favour of validity. In the case of the new ordinations, however, the presumption is always against validity, since a non-Catholic rite was used in place of the Catholic ceremony.

Another difficulty concerns not only the bishop’s intention, but whether he is a bishop at all. It is uncertain that bishops consecrated under the new rite of episcopal consecration are really bishops, since the necessary words of episcopal consecration have been changed altogether. Adding to the confusion is the Second Vatican Council’s decree on the episcopacy, which implicitly redefined the sacrament of Holy Orders contrary to the traditional teaching of the Church. Vatican II upheld the sacramental character of the episcopacy on the grounds that *it is directed to governing and teaching the faithful* who are the Mystical Body of Christ. This

doctrine that a sacrament, as a sacrament, is directed primarily to the faithful is precisely the teaching of Martin Luther. The Catholic teaching, rather, is that a sacrament is a sacrament only in that it is directed to the Real Body of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. Thus, the problem of the new ordination rite involves much more than the tampering with one single sacrament; it is the fruit springing from a whole new concept of “sacrament” in itself, and so the perversion of all the sacraments.

Finally there is, again, the intention of the man to be consecrated and the intention of those consecrating him. Did the bishop-elect want to be a Catholic bishop? Did he even know the true nature of the Catholic episcopacy? And did the consecrating bishops really want to consecrate a true Successor of the Apostles? Again, the presumption must be against validity, since their intentions must be interpreted according to the rite which they used, and the new rite is simply not Catholic.

So we see that there are many difficulties involved with the new rite of ordination of a new priest for the Conciliar Church. Any single one of the factors mentioned above would serve to render the ordination totally null and void.

On the practical level, I might also mention the decision of Archbishop Lefebvre with regard to the new ordination rite. When I spoke with him last June, Monseigneur said that if a priest ordained with the new rite wished to help the Society of Saint Pius X in the administration of the Sacraments, such a priest would have to be ordained conditionally according to the traditional Catholic rite of priestly ordination.

² This Sacrament is traditionally preceded by Confession and Absolution.

³ The reference is to Genesis III: 15.

⁴ Taken from Rev. Adrian Kilker’s text *Extreme Unction, A Canonical Treatise*, B. Herder: St. Louis, Mo., 1927. The Latin is from St. Thomas’ *Summa Contra Gent.*, lib. 4., c. 73, *de Ext. Una*.

⁵ A Catholic should fear the American dream of dying on the golf course “suddenly” (i.e. with no preparation), away from the sacraments and family.

⁶ Charles J. Keating, “The Sacrament of Anointing the Sick” *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, June, 1974.

⁷ Incidentally, the Post-conciliar priest is “forbidden” to use the traditional “form” by Paul VI’s Apostolic Constitution.