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The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness

by

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"Show the people the ceremonies and the manner of worshipping" (Exod. xviii. 20)

The history of the Abbey of Solesmes recapitulates in a striking manner the repeated tragedies of the Catholic Tradition. Founded in 1010 by Geoffrey, seigneur of Sablé, it was twice pillaged and almost completely destroyed by fire in the Hundred Years' War. Rebuilt at the end of the fifteenth century, it was again ravaged by the Huguenots. Absorbed in 1722 by the Congregation of Saint Maur, it ended by being surpressed in 1791, and the buildings passed into private hands. In 1831 the property was put up for sale and purchased by a young priest, Prosper Guéranger, who had grown up in the neighbourhood and had long been offended by the state of desecration in which the monastery lay. At the age of twenty-two years, he collected the necessary funds and gathered five like-minded priests to reform the Benedictine monastery of Solesmes. Within four years Dom Gueranger was professed at Rome and raised to the rank of abbot.

Under Dom Guéranger, the community of Solesmes achieved a worldwide reputation for its erudition and its devotion to monastic and liturgical studies. Its greatest work, and that for which its monks are best known, has been the restoration of the true Gregorian chant of the church.

It was with great interest therefore that I recently obtained, from a group of books discarded by a Catholic seminary, a copy of the *Institutions Liturgigues* of the R.P. Dom Prosper Guéranger, Chapter XIV of which is in great part translated below. In view of the liturgical reforms that have inundated the still faithful members of the Catholic Church, it is not without a certain fascination that one reads his comments on what he so aptly calls "the antiliturgical heresy". However, before turning to the translation itself, a further word about Solesmes. Since its restoration by Guéranger, the abbey has been dissolved by the French government no less than four times. In 1880, 1882, and 1883 the monks were ejected by force, but, receiving hospitality in the neighbourhood, succeeded each time in re-entering their abbey. At the final expulsion in 1903 they were, like all the other (non-charitable) religious associations in France, forced to leave the country. They subsequently re-established themselves at the abbey at Quarr, on the Isle of Wight. A daughter house was established at Benoit-du-lac in Canada, and in 1922 the monks were allowed to return to Solesmes.

As for the Gregorian chant, “the voice of the turtle-dove is heard no more”, for as the new Catholic Encyclopedia (1967) states, “it is generally found to be too alien to the twentieth century aesthetic tastes ....With the increase of the vernacular in the liturgy, less interest has been shown” in its use. “*Quomodo cantabimus canticum Domini in terra aliena*—How can we sing the song of the Lord in a strange land?” (Ps. 136)

Translation of Dom Gueranger’s text

In order to give one a clear picture of the havoc that the antiliturgical movement has wrecked, it would seem to us to be advantageous to review the various steps these pretended reformers of Christianity have taken over the past three centuries, and to present a summary of their methods and teachings on the “purification” of the divine worship. Nothing could better demonstrate the reasons for, nor better elucidate the causes of, the rapid spread of Protestant doctrines in our time. Their methods reveal a wisdom truly diabolical in character, that has become in their hands a most effective weapon capable of producing enormous consequences.

(1) The first characteristic of the antiliturgical movement is *the hatred of all that is Traditional in the formulas of divine worship* (italics are throughout those of the author). It is undeniable that this characteristic trait is present in the works of all the heretics from Vigilance to Calvin, and the reason for this is quite plain. Every sectarian tendency desiring to introduce new and innovative doctrines invariably finds itself in direct opposition to that Liturgy which is the most powerful manifestation of the Tradition, and cannot rest satisfied until it has supressed this voice and destroyed this repository of a prior faith. In reality, how have Lutheranism, Calvinism and Anglicism managed to establish and maintain themselves among their followers ? They have done this by substituting new books for the old, by replacing ancient formulations with new ones; and all that was desired was accomplished. No resistance was left. The faith of the common people was vanquished without a battle. Luther understood this with a wisdom worthy of our own Jansenists, when in the first years of his reforms he found himself obliged to retain certain exterior forms of the Latin worship. He promulgated the following rule for the reformed Mass .

We approve and wish to keep the introit for Sundays and for the feasts of Jesus Christ, Easter, Pentecost and Christmas. *We prefer strongly that the entire psalms from which the introits are taken be used*, as was formerly done, but it is satisfactory to conform to the present practice. We do not criticise those who would also wish to retain the introits of the Apostles, of the Virgin and of the other saints BECAUSE THESE THREE INTROITS ARE TAKEN FROM THE PSALMS AND THE OTHER SCRIPTURAL WRITINGS.

He had however, an excessive horror of those sacred canticles written by the Church herself in order to publically express her faith. He sensed in them too much of that strength of Tradition that he wished to banish. He knew that the Church had a right to blend her voice with scriptural

pronouncements in her religious assemblies. However to accept this would have exposed him and his innovative doctrines to the anathemas of the millions of voices who repeat the Traditional Liturgy. It is for this reason that the heretic hates everything in the Liturgy that is not drawn strictly from Holy Scripture.

(2) This then brings us to the second prevailing principle among those who would oppose the Traditional Liturgy, namely: *to replace the formulations sanctified by ecclesiastical usage with readings drawn from the Bible*. They find in this two advantages: First, the destruction of the voice of Tradition which they always hate, and second, a means of supporting and propagating their new teachings in both a negative and a positive manner. In a negative manner by passing over in silence those Scriptural passages which express any opposition to the errors that they wish to teach, and in a positive manner by careful selection and by taking out of context certain passages from Scripture that while speaking of one aspect of the Truth, fail to give a complete and total picture. Everyone knows that heretics throughout the centuries have preferred to quote Scripture rather than to accept ecclesiastical definitions, for the simple reason that this allows them to place in the mouth of God whatever they wish by the appropriate selection of phrases. Moreover, we see that this enables them, after the fashion of the Jansenists (to whom this was important) to keep up the appearance of being within the body of the Church: when we come to the Protestants, they have almost completely reduced the Liturgy to the readings of Scripture, accompanied with sermons that expound the Bible along purely rationalistic lines only. As far as the choice of which of the Biblical books are canonical, this in the final analysis depends upon the caprice of the reformer in question, who in the end not only decides the sense or meaning of the word of God, but also determines whether any given word is to be accepted as authentic. Thus Martin Luther, in order to bolster his system of pantheism, his doctrine of the uselessness of works and of the sufficiency of faith, ended by declaring that the Epistle of Saint James was false and not canonical because it alone stressed the necessity of works for salvation. At all times and under many disguises,it is always the same—the rejection of ecclesiastical formulations; Scripture alone is valid, but Scripture carefully selected and even more carefully interpreted by the person who wishes to introduce innovation. The trap is indeed dangerous for the unwary. It is only long afterward that one perceives that one has fallen, and that the word of God, like the double-edged sword as the Apostle says, has inflicted grievous wounds, because it has been wielded by the sons of perdition

(3) The Third principle, or perhaps problem, that those who are involved in reforming the Liturgy encounter is, after having rejected the ecclesiastical formulas, and after having declared and proclaimed the absolute necessity of resorting to the words of Scripture in the divine service, to find that Scripture is not always as pliable to their ends as they would like. Their third principle, we say, is *to make up and introduce various and sundry formulas of their own*, full of perfidy, by which the people are entrapped even more firmly in error, and thus the entire edifice of impious reform is consolidated for all time.

(4) No one should be surprised at the intrinsic contradictions that heresy presents in its work when one knows the fourth principle, or rather, the fourth necessity imposed on sectarianism by the very nature of its revolt, namely: *a habitual contradiction with its own proper principles*. And so it should be, for its internal contradictions will be revealed in broad daylight sooner or later when God exposes its vacuity to the eyes of the very people it has seduced, and also because it is not given to man to be consistent, but only to the Truth. Thus all heretics without exception start out by wishing to return to the customs of early Christianity. They wish to remove from the faith all that the errors and passions of man have mixed with the original pure teachings—all that they consider spurious and insulting to God. With this in view they prune, they efface, they suppress—everything falls under their hatchet—and while we await a vision of our religion in its pristine purity, we find ourselves encumbered with new formulations, fresh off the press, and incontestably human—for those who have invented them are still alive. Every heretical sect is subject to this necessity. We have seen it with the Monophysites, with the Nestorians, and we find it in all the branches of Protestantism. In their desire to return to the ways of "early Christianity" all that has passed from those early days is destroyed. Then the reformers put themselves before those whom they have seduced and assure them that all is well, that the supercilious papists have disappeared, and that religion has now returned to its primitive and essential character. A further trait of these reformers is that they have an absolute rage for innovation. They are not satisfied with pruning the Church's formulations, which they brand as being of purely human origin, but even extend their reproaches to those readings and prayers that the Church has drawn from Scripture. They change the words and substitute new phrases. They have no desire to pray in unity with the Church and separate themselves from her. It is almost as if those who pick and choose the readings feared lest some slight residue of orthodoxy should remain.

(5) Liturgical reform is embraced by her advocates to the same end as dogmatic reform—indeed it is from the latter that the former derives. Thus it follows that the Protestants, separated from the Church that they might have less to believe in, find themselves most amenable to *supressing in the divine worship all the ceremonies and all the formulations that are expressive of the mysterious*. Confused by their doubts and blinded by their negation of all that would open the door to the supernatural, they expunge everything that to them appears other than purely rational. Thus apart from baptism[1], the sacraments are decried in accordance with the

[1] All the rites of the sacraments have been "brought up to date", the least offensive changes being those related to the rite of Baptism. To give examples: The rite of Extreme Unction has now been changed to the "annointing of the sick" in order "to reduce the sometimes frightening `clack of magic' that has surrounded this sacrament" in the past. Liturgical expert Father Secondo Mazzarello states "the aim now is to comfort the sick person. Pain and sickness are seen as the problems of the entire man, body and soul together. The new rite gets away from the Platonic concept, which for centuries split man into body and soul." (*Time* magazine, Feb. 5, 1973) And again, the new sacrament of marriage omits the vow of obedience, for women are now "liberated".

Socinianism[2] embraced by their adepts. No more sacramentals, no more benedictions, icons and relics of saints. No processions and no pilgrimages. No more altar, just a simple *table*. No more sacrifice, such as every religion demands, but a *meal*. No more church, just a *house of worship*, as with the Greeks and Romans. No more religious architecture, because there is no longer anything mysterious to express. No more Christian painting and Christian sculpture, for there is no longer a palpable and living religion. And finally, no more of the poetic in a worship that is no longer fertilized by love and by faith.

(6) The supression of the mystical element in the Protestant liturgy inevitably results in *the total extinction of that spirit of prayer that is the essential cornerstone of Catholicism*. A heart that is in revolt is without love, and a heart without love corrupts all—even the most tolerable expressions of belief—with a proud and pharisaical frigidity, and such indeed is what we find in the reformed liturgy. One almost feels that those who recite the Protestant liturgy congratulate themselves like the Publican for not being amongst those papists who debase God with the familiarity of their simple prayers.

(7) Treating God with proper respect, the Protestant liturgy feels no need for invented intermediaries. These people consider the invoking of the Blessed Virgin and the saints to be an insult to God. *They exclude all this papist idolatry which asks through an intermediary what one should only ask of God.* They disembarrass the calendar of all those names of men that the Roman Church has so rashly inscribed as being close to God. They have no use for those who come after the Apostles. Only the Apostles, chosen by Christ and founders of the primitive Church, had in their eyes the pure faith, free from all superstition and moral error.

(8) Liturgical reform, having as one of its basic principles the abolition of all mystical acts and formulations, *insists upon* the usage of modern languages for the divine service. This is one of the most important aspects of the heretical stance of these persons. There is, they say, nothing secret about worship, and the people must understand what they sing. The hatred of the Latin language is inborn in the hearts of all who hate Rome. They see in it a bond that unites Catholics throughout the world, a weapon of orthodoxy against all the subtleties of the sectarian spirit, and a most powerful arm of the Papacy. The spirit of revolt that they have embraced forces them to confine themselves to the idiom of the local people, of a particular province or of a specific country. Despite this, however, the fruits of reform are always the same, for the orthodox, despite their Latin prayers, are more devout, and fulfil the obligations of worship with greater zeal than do the Protestants. At every hour of the day the divine service is fulfilled in Catholic churches. The faithful assist at these prayers, leaving their native tongues at the threshold of the Church,

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[2] Socinianism—The tenets or doctrinal system of Faustus Socinus (Sozzini), an Italian theologian (1539-1604), that denies the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, the personality of the Devil, the native and total depravity of man, the substitutionary atonement, the efficacy of sacraments and the eternity of future punishment (Webster's Dictionary).

and if apart from the sermons they only hear those mysterious phrases which have been retained since time immemorial at the most solemn moments—at the canon of the Mass—they nevertheless have no envy of the fate of the Protestant whose ears are never assailed by words the meaning of which is not clear. And while the reformed churches gather their flocks of Christian purists only with great difficulty on Sunday, the Roman Church finds her devout children besieging her innumerable altars constantly. Each day they leave their work to come and hear the mysterious words that nourish their faith and pours balm into their souls. Surely it is one of the most masterful strokes of the reformers to declare war on the holy language of Latin, for if they succeed in destroying its use, their aims are all but accomplished. The liturgy, from the moment it loses its sacred character and is offered to the people in a profaned manner, becomes like a dishonoured Virgin. The faithful will hardly find it worth their while to leave their work, or to abandon their pleasures, in order to come to a Church where the language of the market place is spoken. Consider the so-called Reformed Church of France with her radical declamations and her diatribes against the supposed venality of the clergy. How long do you think the faithful will go to hear these self-styled liturgists cry "The Lord be with you", and how long will they continue to respond "and with your spirit"? We shall deal elsewhere more fully on the subject of liturgical language.

(9) In deleting from the Liturgy the mysterious element which keeps reason within its proper bounds, these reformers have not forgotten a most important consequence, namely: *the relief from the fatigue and the constraint that the practising of the papist liturgy enjoins upon the body*. No more fasting and abstinence, no more genuflections during prayer. For their ministers, no obligation to say the office, or even to say the canonical prayers of the Church. Certainly one of the principal characteristics of the great Protestant emancipation is to *reduce the burden of public and private prayer*. The results follow rapidly, for faith and charity, nourished as they are by prayer, are smothered. Meanwhile the orthodox are continuously nourished by acts of self-sacrifice to man and for God, and are sustained by the same ineffable sources that liturgical prayer draws from—prayer moreover performed by the clergy, both regular and secular, in union with the community of the faithful.

(10) Reformers have an uncanny faculty for discerning which one of the various ecclesiastical institutions is most hostile to their principles the corner-stone as it were of the entire Catholic edifice. Almost with an animal instinct, they have discovered that point of dogma that is most irreconcilible with their innovations, *the power of the Papacy*. Luther's standard boldly carried the statement *Hatred of Rome and of her laws*, and in this one phrase is summarized the essence of the reformist position. Under this banner is abolished with one stroke, all the ceremonies and the worship of the "Roman idolatry", the Latin language, the divine office, the calendar, the breviary, indeed "all the abominations of that great whore of Babylon." It is not in vain that the Roman Pontiff stresses certain dogmas and certain ritual practices. It is equally necessary for the reformer to proclaim these as blasphemy and error, and to see in them a tyranny and an

imposition. Thus it is that the Lutheran Church continues to pray to this day “Deliver us from homicide, from calumny, from the rapicity and ferocity of the Turk and from the Pope”. It is worthwhile here to recall the admirable comments of Joseph de Maistre in his book “On the Pope”, where he shows with great sagacity that despite the numerous dissonances that separate the diverse Protestant denominations, there is one quality on which they are all in agreement, that of being *non-Roman*. Imagine an innovation, any innovation whatsoever it be, in the matter of dogma or discipline, and see if it is possible to present it in a manner, no matter how one may try, that is not in essence *non-Roman* or at best quasi-Roman. And in conscience, what kind of Catholic could consider himself as *quasi-Roman*?

(11) The antiliturgical heresies must, on principle, if they are to establish themselves in perpetuity, destroy the priesthood. They know that while there is a Pope, there will be an altar, and where there is an altar, there will be a sacrifice, and consequently a mysterious ceremony. After having abolished the supreme Pontiff, they will have to eliminate the bishops from whence comes that mystical imposition of hands which perpetuates the sacred hierarachy. Only then will follow *that vast presbyterian wasteland which is the inevitable result of the supression of the Papacy*. There will no longer be priests, properly speaking, but rather leaders that are elected and without consecration. How can the act of election make of a man a sanctified priest ? The reforms of Luther and Calvin can only speak of ministers of God; merely men. Nor are they satisfied to stop at this. Their ministers, chosen and installed by the laity, wear in their houses of worship, a garment of bastard magistry, for they are only laymen assuming sacred functions. All this as it were results from the absence of liturgy, and how can a laity in isolation produce a liturgy?

(12) And finally, we see the last degree of degradation. The priesthood no longer exists. The hierarchy is dead. The prince or ruler is the only possible authority left among the laity that can be proclaimed as head of religion. How natural it is then, for these reformers, having broken the spiritual yoke of Rome, to proclaim the temporal sovereign as their supreme pontiff, and to consider the power to decide on liturgical matters one of the *king’s prerogatives*. No longer can there be any dogma, any morality, any sacraments, any worship, indeed any Christianity, unless it be in accord with the ruler’s priorities. Now this is a fundamental axiom of the reformers both in their writings and in their practice. This last characteristic completes the picture and allows the reader to judge for himself the nature of this vaunted disenfranchisement from the Papacy that is carried on with so much violence. And in the long run this can only result in the destructive domination of temporal and wordly powers over the very essence of Christianity. Now it is true that in the beginning the antiliturgical sects did not set out to flatter those in power. The Albigenses, the Waldenses, the Wycliffians and the Hussites all taught that one should resist the demand of princes and magistrates with great courage when they were found to be sinners. They hold that a prince in the state of sin has lost his right to command. The reason for this is that these heretics feared the sword of Catholic princes. Being bishops without a church, they had

everything to lose from royal authority that disagreed with them. But as soon as the princes associated themselves with the revolt against Rome and wished to make religion a national affair, and a means of governing their subjects, liturgy and indeed dogma itself became subject to national interests. And when this happened, these reformers could not move rapidly enough to recognize and succour that secular force which wished to establish and maintain their personal theories. There can be no doubt but that giving preference to the temporal power over the spiritual power in matters of religion is an act of apostasy. But unfortunately this is not the only aspect of the problem, for above all the heretic must insure his own survival. This is why Luther, separated as he was from the Pontiff in Rome ("seduced" as the Pope was by all the "abominations of Babylon") did not hesitate to declare the second marriage of the Landgrave of Hesse to be theologically legitimate. This is also why the Abbot Gregory had no scruples about lending his support to the condemnation to death of Louis XVI, while championing Louis XIV and Joseph II in their struggle against the Pope.

Such then are the principal tenets of the antiliturgical reformers. We have by no means exaggerated the situation. Their writings are easy to consult for they are widely spread throughout the world. We have only revealed what they themselves have repeatedly promulgated. We feel moreover that it is important to clearly expose these tendencies, for it is always good to understand error. Unfortunately it is often much easier to contradict error than it is to teach the Truth.

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Translator's Comment

No one can denigrate Dom Guéranger's status as a liturgist. Written over a hundred years ago, his outline could act as a virtual blueprint for current liturgical reform. To bring the text up to date one has only to replace the terms "Protestant" and "Heretic" with the phrases "Modernist" and "Existentialist". An even clearer rendering results if we replace the names of Calvin and Luther with the names of some of our current "speculative" theologians. One could not have written a more pungent critique of the "New Church".

Let us for a moment consider the place that Scripture has taken in the New Mass. The Introit has been replaced by readings from the Psalms. We have three Scripture readings rather than two. Almost all the ecclesiastical formulations and Traditional prayers have been dropped, including the ancient canons. Priests (the prefered term in the Novo Ordo is "presidents"![3]) who fail to kneel before the open Tabernacle, and who do not bother to rinse the consecrated chalice,

[3] Novo Ordo refers to the order or manner of performing the "New Mass", and is literally translated as "New Order". In this promulgation the priest is referred to as the "President", a phrase drawn from Saint Justin Martyr (where it refers to one presiding over the gifts). In current English usage its connotations are obviously different, and we must thank the Watergate scandals for its infrequent use.

kiss the Bible with great ceremony. Indeed the Mass is now referred to with such phrases as "The Liturgy of the Word", and even more recently by the American bishops as a "Eucharistic literary liturgy".

But the reformists do not stop at this, for scripture is not always as pliable to their ends as they would like. This problem has been solved in a most brilliant though not original manner (as the Abbot says elsewhere, "error has its traditions, just like the truth"). We now have several new translations of the Bible. The "official" one is the "New American Bible", produced "with the approval of Church authority ... in cooperation with our separated bretheren" so that "all Christians might be able to use it" (the phrases are from the Second Vatican Council and are quoted by Pius VI in his introductory blessing). One could take many and varied examples from this text and demonstrate that wherever possible, the most Protestant and rationalistic interpretation has been used. We are informed, for instance that the Angelic greeting was not "Hail Mary, full of grace", but rather "Rejoice, O highly favoured daughter". But the reformists are not very happy with this translation and frequently pick and choose others that are more to their liking. Thus recently at a "High Mass" the following was read:

Work happily together. Don't try to act big. Don't try to get into the good graces of important people, but enjoy the company of ordinary folk.[4]

Even the words of Christ himself are not immune, for He was not adequately imbued with that spirit of democracy that is so important to contemporary man. We are now informed that he raised the Chalice for "all men", and not for "many" as the Apostles wrote, and as it is translated in all of the seventy-six ancient and Traditional rites of consecration.

Now all this picking and choosing of Scripture, and the free use of any translation that suits the celebrating priest, is nothing new. As St. Ephrem says, "heretics wishing to prove their errors endeavour to support them by texts from the divine Scriptures" (Tractat. C.8). The devil cited Scripture to our Saviour Himself, but as St. Chrysostom remarks, "he mutilated the text, leaving out what was against him". St. Augustine says to the Manichaeans, "You only believe in Scripture what you wish to believe, and what you find unacceptable, you reject. In fact, you do not believe in the Scriptures, but in your own opinions" (Cont. Faust. xvi.3). But though "the devil wished to show himself learned", says St. Thomas of Villanova, "yet he failed in three things. First, he depraved the Scriptures, applying to the head what was said of the body. Secondly, because the authority did not apply to the question `*scriptum est'*. What is written

[4] Douay translation: Romans XII, 16—"Be of one mind towards one another. Do not set your mind on high things but condescend to the lowly. Be not wise in your own conceits." Use of other than the `official' translation is an obvious act of disobedience—but then obedience to canon laws is, for all practical purposes, a thing of the past. For example, in over seventy-five per cent of public Masses, the priest makes up his own prayers.

there, malignant one ? He has given his angels charge *ut custodiant te in omnibus viis tuis. Nun quid in praecipitis* ?[5] Thirdly, because he did not cite the whole passage …" (Dom. i . Quad.). And thus it follows, as Kenelm Digby says, "in all this his members at the present day imitate him in order to deceive the simple" (Capitum, Vol V, 175). How happy Tyndale must be to see himself, after all these years, vindicated against Saint Thomas More ! But one thing is certain, "our separated brethren", no matter how far they have wandered from Rome, cannot take offence with these new and liberal versions of the "Word of God".

Time has not yet destroyed the Papacy, nor created that vast wasteland of presbyterianism that the Abbot so much feared, but then time has not yet run its course. Pope Pius VI is not attacked in the current liturgy, though indeed the modernists constantly accuse him of "not going far enough". But why attack a Pope that has been their greatest ally ? Without the approval of the present Pope, the extensive changes that have occurred could never have been forced down the throat of the laity. But make no mistake, if the Pope himself has not been excessively attacked, the Papacy has been severely undermined. The potential power of Rome is still feared. All sorts of erosive suggestions, under such high-sounding phrases as "collegiality" and "dejuridication" are used to circumscribe his power. Infallibility is under constant attack. When the Pope speaks out in favour of what the modernists want, we are told we have an obligation to "obey", but when he calls a halt to their demands, we are told that "we must follow our conscience" which inevitably means what the reformists want. Let a new Pope speak out against their violent "rage for innovation" and such a hue and cry will be raised as to topple the very statues of the Apostles that still stand on the porticos of Saint Peter's square. This Pope may be—with reluctance—acceptable, but the Papacy is not !

Lastly, the modernist has not rushed to succour the rulers of this world. But things have changed since the Abbot's time. The rulers of the contemporary world, those vast multinational conglomerates that can topple governments and buy whole nations, have little need of the reformists' help. The forces of religion are no longer of political or sociological consideration, for religion has become a "private matter". Nor can the masses be manipulated through religious principles. And should the faithful still represent a potential force in the world, the powers can afford to stand by and ignore them while the Church seemingly seeks to destroy herself along the lines of the Abbot's other salient points. Why meddle when the soup is cooking well ?

Surely the current crop of pseudo-liturgists must be afflicted with an inescapable myopia not to see that the father of innovation is none other than that Fallen Angel that many years ago set out to reform the heavenly hierarchy. Are they not crying out like the sons of Edom "*Evertite, evertite ipso fundamenta in ea*—let us destroy her and tear her down, even to her very foundations" (Ps. 136). "It is madness" says Saint Augustine, "to quit the traditions of the Church

[5] That they would protect you in all your paths: What is there in this about throwing yourself down from a precipice?

and follow our own opinions". Vulgarity—and certainly the modern liturgy can only be described as vulgar—says Cicero, is derrived "*ex veritate pauca, ex opinione multa*—very little from the truth and mostly from personal opinion". Would it not be much better for us to say, with Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, "*Sufficit nobis nolumus esse meliores quam patres nostri*—it suffices for us not to wish to be better than our fathers".

Finished on the Feast of Saint Michael the Archangel, 1974.