

# Living Tradition

ORGAN OF THE ROMAN THEOLOGICAL FORUM

NO. 154

September 2011

## *PART I: POPE PAUL'S GENERAL APPROACH TO SCRIPTURE*

### THE BIBLICAL DIMENSION OF PAUL VI'S LITURGICAL VISION

*by Brian W. Harrison*

It is probably no exaggeration to state that of all the ways in which Paul VI hoped to see the Church's life enriched still further by Sacred Scripture, its more abundant, fruitful and prominent role in the liturgy was closest of all to his heart. Even before his election to the papacy, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Montini made clear his position on this matter: his personal interest in Scripture seems to have been more pastoral and spiritual than academic and doctrinal. As we will see in another article, he was not especially anxious that Vatican II, which had been called as a pastoral Council, should pronounce itself in dogmatic terms in regard to matters of biblical exegesis. In response to the Antepreparatory Commission's request for submissions from all the Church's prelates and leading institutions as to what the Council should discuss, Montini sent in an extensive dossier, divided into several sections according to theme. Scripture was not even mentioned in his suggestions under the heading "Doctrine,"<sup>1</sup> and in fact nowhere are there any suggestions regarding matters of biblical interpretation or exegesis. Scripture was mentioned quite emphatically, however, in the Cardinal's suggestions on liturgy: "The theological and biblical dimensions of Christian liturgy should by all means be restored."<sup>2</sup>

Montini's sentiments were of course widely shared by others, and within a few months of his election as Supreme Pontiff he was able to promulgate the conciliar Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, which declared that "In the sacred rites, a more abundant, more varied, and more appropriate selection of readings from Sacred Scripture is to be restored."<sup>3</sup>

#### 1. The Eucharistic Liturgy

More specifically, the Council declared: "The treasures of the Bible are to be opened up more lavishly so that a richer fare may be provided for the faithful at the table of God's word. In this way a more representative part of the Sacred Scriptures will be read to the people in the course of a prescribed number of years."<sup>4</sup>

Throughout his pontificate, Pope Paul made clear his will to implement energetically the Council's wishes in this matter. Even before the preparation of the new lectionary, he paved the way for it by an early extension of a practice,

<sup>1</sup> G.B. Montini, *Discorsi e Scritti sul Concilio (1959-1963)*, ed. A. Rimoldi, (Brescia: Istituto Paolo VI, 1983, 35-36). It seems significant, also, that in a discourse he gave as Archbishop of Milan in 1956 on the magisterial interventions of Pope Pius XII, Montini did not even mention the 'landmark' 1943 Encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu* on biblical studies, even though he commented on most of the other major documents of the pontificate up till that point. Cf. G.B. Montini, "Considerazioni sul magistero di S.S. Pio XII," *Notiziario*, 17 (Brescia: Istituto Paolo VI, 1988, 32-40).

<sup>2</sup> "Oportet omnino Christianorum cultui theologicas et biblicas proportiones restituere" (G.B. Montini, *DeS.*, 37-38).

<sup>3</sup> "... celebrationibus sacris abundantior, varior et aptior lectio sacrae Scripturae instauretur" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 35: 1, AAS 56 [1964] 109).

<sup>4</sup> "Quo ditior mensa verbi Dei paretur fidelibus, thesauri biblici largius aperiantur, ita ut, intra praestitutum annorum spatium, praestantior pars Scripturarum Sanctarum populo legatur" (*SC* 51, *ibid.*, 114).

Editor: Msgr. John F. McCarthy, J.C.D., S.T.D.

Associate Editor: Rev. Brian W. Harrison, O.S., M.A., S.T.D.

Please address all correspondence to: [www.rtforum.org](http://www.rtforum.org) e-mail: <jfm@rtforum.org>

Distributed several times a year to interested members.

Not to be republished without permission.

*Living Tradition*, Oblates of Wisdom, P.O. Box 13230, St. Louis, MO 63157, USA

which, at the initiative of Cardinal Michæl Faulhaber, Archbishop of Munich, had become widespread in Germany even before the Council. In order to give the faithful a wider exposure to Scripture in the liturgy, a lector would read out loud in German certain newly-selected biblical passages — that is, passages not necessarily found in the Roman Missal — which would form the basis of the homily, while the celebrant read quietly in Latin the Epistle and Gospel officially appointed for that day in the Missal.<sup>5</sup>

However, when in 1964 these traditional readings themselves were ordered to be read throughout the world in the vernacular instead of Latin, this German initiative ceased, with the result that Catholics in that country lost that wider selection of readings to which they had become accustomed.

For that reason the German bishops petitioned the Holy See in November 1964 for the right to use their new local lectionary instead of the traditional readings. The Swiss and Dutch episcopal conferences followed with similar requests in January and March 1965 respectively.<sup>6</sup> The result was that in the audience of 12 May 1965 given to Cardinal Giacomo Lercaro, President of the *Consilium* for the liturgical reform, Paul VI approved the petitions of these three national episcopates, on the understanding that their new lectionaries would be *ad experimentum*, and that a detailed report would be submitted in due course evaluating the success or otherwise of the experiment. A similar request by the French bishops was approved on 20 April 1966.<sup>7</sup> Thus it was that the first substantial change in over a millennium to the Scripture readings used for Sunday Mass in the Roman rite was introduced by Paul VI even before the Council had ended.

During 1965 and 1966 the *Consilium* and its advisers prepared the basic criteria for a new universal lectionary, and these were presented in a report to the Holy Father on 10 November 1966.<sup>8</sup> By July 1967 a draft of the new lectionary itself was prepared in accordance with these criteria and distributed for evaluation to all episcopal conferences and to 800 scriptural, catechetical, pastoral and liturgical experts nominated by these conferences.

Within six months no less than 460 responses had been submitted and the *Consilium* began revising the proposed lectionary in the light of these observations. By April 1968 the main changes had been made and the lectionary for Sundays and weekdays was practically ready. The following winter (1968-1969) was dedicated to the lectionary for other Masses: commons, ritual Masses, propers of saints, etc.<sup>9</sup>

Paul VI, understandably, did not have sufficient time to carry out a detailed personal study of the exact readings selected for every Mass in the entire lectionary. However, he had of course given his approval in 1966 to the criteria which were to be used in this very extensive task. Thus, shortly after the publication of the new Roman Missal itself in April 1969, the Pope was able to approve the new lectionary in the following autograph letter to Cardinal Benno Gut, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship:

It has not been possible for us, in the very brief period of time available, to reach a complete and accurate vision of this new and ample “Ordo Lectionum Missæ.” But on the basis of confidence in the devout and expert persons who have prepared it after such lengthy study, and also that confidence which we owe to the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, which has examined and composed this Lectionary with such care and expertise, we gladly approve it, in the name of the Lord.

On the Feast of St. John the Baptist, 24 June 1969, Paulus PP. VI<sup>10</sup>

The two major public documents which make explicit the Pope’s will regarding the renewed use of Scripture in the Liturgy are the two Apostolic Constitutions of 1969 and 1970, promulgating the revised order of Mass and the revised Liturgy of the Hours respectively. In the first of these, *Missale Romanum* (3 April 1969), it was explained that in order to implement the Council’s prescription, a third reading would be added for Sundays and Feast Days. This would precede the traditional Epistle and Gospel, and would normally be from the Old Testament, so that the mysteries of salvation would become more familiar to the Catholic people. The Pope explained as follows the plan which has since become a familiar part of the worship of Latin-rite Catholics:

<sup>5</sup> Cf. A. Bugnini, *La riforma liturgica (1948 - 1975)* (Rome: CLV Edizioni Liturgiche, 1983, 401).

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, 401-402.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, 402.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, 413.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, 414-415.

<sup>10</sup> “Non ci è possibile, nel brevissimo spazio di tempo che ci è indicato, prendere accurata e completa visione di questo nuovo ed ampio ‘Ordo Lectionum Missæ’.

“Ma fondati sulla fiducia delle persone esperte e pie, che lo hanno con lungo studio preparato, e su quella dovuta alla sacra Congregazione per il Culto divino, che lo ha con tanta perizia e sollecitudine esaminato e composto, volentieri noi lo approviamo, in nomine Domini.

“Nella Festa di S. Giovanni Battista, 24 giugno 1969

Paulus PP. VI” (*ibid.*, 415).

The whole body of the Sunday readings is distributed in a cycle of three years. In addition, on Sundays and feast-days, the Epistle and Gospel are preceded by another reading taken from the Old Testament, or, during Eastertide, from the Acts of the Apostles. By this order, the continuous process of the mystery of salvation is illustrated and shown forth in the words of divine revelation. This much more ample selection of biblical readings, which offer to the people on Sundays and feast-days the most important parts of the Sacred Scriptures, is complemented on ordinary weekdays by readings from the remaining parts of the Bible.<sup>11</sup>

Pope Paul then continued with fervent language to exhort both priests and faithful “most ardently” (*vehementer*) to take advantage of this new disposition in order to stimulate an ever greater “hunger for the Word of God,” alluding to the metaphor of the Old Testament prophet (Amos 8:11):

All these various dispositions are intended to stimulate ever more intensely among the faithful that hunger for the word of God which, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we now see urging the people of the New Covenant towards the goal of perfect unity within the Church. We cherish the most ardent hope that, through the influence of these new arrangements, both priests and people will together prepare themselves more effectively for the celebration of the Lord’s Supper and, at the same time, will day by day be nourished more richly from the word of God through deeper reflection on Sacred Scripture.<sup>12</sup>

## 2. The Divine Office (Liturgy of the Hours)

In the following year the revised Liturgy of the Hours was promulgated by the Apostolic Constitution *Laudis canticum* of 1 November 1970, and here too Pope Paul used glowing imagery to describe the way in which the Divine Office was now further enriched by Scripture. “The treasury of the divine Word,” he affirmed, “is poured forth more abundantly”; and indeed, the celebration of Vespers will now be “adorned” by the “pearls” of New Testament canticles. After explaining the new disposition of the Psalms for recitation over a four-week period, the Pope continues:

4. . . . Moreover, a number of new canticles taken from the Old Testament have been added to the office of Lauds, thereby increasing its rich spirituality. Vespers also now includes canticles — New Testament passages which adorn it like pearls.

5. . . . The treasury of the divine word is poured out more abundantly in the new order of readings taken from Sacred Scripture, which has been composed so as to correspond to the order of readings now to be used at Mass. The pericopes themselves manifest a certain unity of theme, and have been selected so as to show forth during the course of each year the principal mysteries of salvation.<sup>13</sup>

In the same document, Paul VI recalls and repeats the Council’s desire that all should develop a “warm and living love for Sacred Scripture.”<sup>14</sup> Indeed, he wants to see the Bible become “the principal well-spring of all Christian prayer.” Recalling the teaching of St Augustine<sup>15</sup> that in the Mystical Body of Christ our voices resound before the Father in

<sup>11</sup> “. . . totum Lectionum corpus diebus dominicis legendarum in trium annorum ordinem distributum est. Præterea diebus utcumque festis, lectioni Epistolæ et Evangelii alia præponitur, ex Veteri Testamento, vel, Tempore Paschali, ex Actibus Apostolorum sumpta. Hac enim adhibita ratione, enucleatus mysterii salutis continuus processus illustratur, verbis Dei revelatis demonstratus. Quæ amplissima lectionum biblicarum copia, qua diebus festis præstantior Sacrarum Scripturarum pars fidelibus proponitur, accessione profecto complectitur reliquarum Librorum Sacrorum partium, quæ diebus profestis recitantur” (AAS 61 [1969] 220).

<sup>12</sup> “Quæ sane omnia hoc modo ordinata sunt, ut magis ac magis in christifidelibus ea verbi Dei fames exstimuletur, qua, Spiritu Santo duce, novi Foederis populus ad perfectam Ecclesiæ unitatem veluti urgeri videatur. Hisce ita compositis, illud etiam vehementer fore confidimus, ut sacerdotes et fideles simul sanctius animum suum ad Cenam Domini præparent, simul, Sacras Scripturas altius meditati, verbis Domini uberius in dies alantur” (*ibid.*, 220-221).

<sup>13</sup> “. . . Præterea nova quædam cantica, ex libris Veteris Testamenti deprompta, Laudibus matutinis, ad earum spiritualem ubertatem augendam, addita sunt; in Vesperas etiam cantica sunt inducta ex Novo Testamento, quibus veluti margaritis ornantur.

“5. Verbi divini thesaurus copiosior effunditur in novo ordine lectionum e sacra Scriptura sumptarum, qui ita compositus est, ut cum ordine lectionum, quæ in Missa fiunt, congruat. Pericopæ quandam unitatem argumenti universe præ se ferunt et ita selectæ sunt, ut præcipua historia salutis momenta per anni cursum representent” (AAS 63 [1971] 530-531).

<sup>14</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 24 recommends a “. . . suavis et vivus sacræ Scripturæ affectus” (AAS 56 [1964] 107).

<sup>15</sup> *Enarrationes in ps.* 85, 1.

Christ's voice and his in ours, the Pope continues: "In order that this characteristic of our prayer may shine forth, it is necessary that *the warm and living love for Sacred Scripture* which is like the very breath of the Liturgy of the Hours should be revived in all hearts, so that Scripture becomes in reality the principal well-spring of all Christian prayer."<sup>16</sup> The Pope goes on to place special emphasis on the deeper typological understanding of the Psalms and their liturgical recital by the People of God (including the laity) in the Divine Office as well as the Mass:

Above all, the prayer of the Psalms, in which the course of God's action in the history of salvation is continually traced out and proclaimed, needs to be appreciated with a rekindled devotion by the People of God. This will be more easily accomplished if that deeper understanding of the Psalms according to that sense in which they are sung in the Liturgy is diligently promoted by the clergy and imparted to all the faithful by appropriate catechesis. This enriched reading of Sacred Scripture — in the new Liturgy of the Hours as well as in the Mass — will have the effect of constantly calling to mind the history of salvation, and of efficaciously proclaiming its continuation in the life of men.<sup>17</sup>

### 3. Other Observations on Scripture in the Liturgy

#### (a) Major Interventions

Pope Paul emphasized the role of Scripture in Christian worship in several other major interventions touching on biblical matters. In his first allocution to the *Associazione Biblica Italiana*, delivered while the Council was in progress (25 September 1964), the Pontiff drew attention to the newly-promulgated Constitution on the Liturgy, "in which the reading, explanation, and indeed, the celebration of God's Word in the Sacred Scriptures are once again inculcated and, we could almost say, exalted."<sup>18</sup>

Two years later, at the next *Settimana Biblica* organized by the Biblical Association (23 September 1966), he paid public tribute to the wisdom of Cardinal Augustin Bea, who, he said, had recalled that the Liturgy is the principal context in which the Church nourishes herself from Sacred Scripture:

Cardinal Bea wisely recalled that "the Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures, just as she has venerated the very Body of Christ. In the sacred Liturgy, above all, she has never failed to nourish herself with the bread of life and offer it to the faithful, both at the table of the Word of God and at that of the Body of Christ."<sup>19</sup>

In his Apostolic Exhortation *Quinque iam anni* of 8 December 1970, marking the completion of the first five years since Vatican Council II, Pope Paul noted that "through the work of the Council, the reading of God's Word in the liturgical actions is being renewed in a wonderful way,"<sup>20</sup> and in a better-known Apostolic Exhortation, *Marialis cultus* (2 February 1974), he declared that the same principle should be extended to worship in the widest sense, that is, including extra-liturgical devotions and pious practices. It was in the context of encouraging a renewal of Marian devotion that the Pope laid down this principle:

<sup>16</sup> "*Quo autem apertius haec orationis nostrae indoles elucescat, necesse est, ut ille suavis et vivus sacrae Scripturae affectus, quem Liturgia Horarum aspirat, in omnibus reviviscat, ita ut sacra Scriptura fons praecipuus totius orationis christianae reapse evadat*" (AAS 63 [1971] 532).

<sup>17</sup> "*Oratio praesertim psalmodum, quae actionem Dei in historia salutis iugiter prosequitur ac praedicat, novo affectu comprehendatur oportet a populo Dei; quod facilius eveniet, si psalmodum altior intellectus, secundum eum sensum, quo in sacra Liturgia canuntur, diligentius apud clerum promovebitur et apta catechesi omnibus fidelibus impertietur. Haec vero sacrae Scripturae ditior lectio non solum in Missa, sed etiam in nova Liturgia Horarum efficiet, ut historia salutis indesinenter recolatur eiusque continuatio in vita hominum efficaciter annuntietur*" (*ibid.*, 532-533).

<sup>18</sup> "*nella quale la lettura, la spiegazione e la celebrazione, potremmo dire, della Parola di Dio contenuta nella Sacra Scrittura sono nuovamente inculcate e quasi esaltate*" (AAS 56 [1964] 937).

<sup>19</sup> "... il Card. Bea ricordava sapientemente che: 'la Chiesa ha sempre venerato le divine Scritture, come ha fatto per il Corpo stesso di Cristo, non mancando mai, soprattutto nella sacra Liturgia, di nutrirsi del pane della vita alla mensa sia della Parola di Dio, che il Corpo di Cristo e di porgerlo ai fedeli'" (*Insegnamenti di Paolo VI*, [Vatican City: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1966], 415). (Series abbreviated hereafter as "Ins.")

<sup>20</sup> "... verbi Dei lectio in actionibus liturgicis, Concilii opera, mirabilem in modum renovatur" (AAS 63 [1971] 99).

Today it is recognized as a general need of Christian piety that every form of worship should have a biblical imprint. The progress made in biblical studies, the increasing dissemination of the Sacred Scriptures, and above all the example of tradition and the interior action of the Holy Spirit are tending to cause the modern Christian to use the Bible ever increasingly as the basic prayerbook and to draw from it genuine inspiration and unsurpassable examples.<sup>21</sup>

Of particular interest is the *way* in which Pope Paul says the Scripture should be used in the context of prayer and liturgy. It is not simply a matter of selecting and citing appropriate texts, but of being able to penetrate their meaning and to let this in turn inspire and permeate the texts of prayers and hymns. The Pope refers specifically to the image of the Blessed Virgin as *Sedes Sapientiae*, Seat of Wisdom, in order to stress one of the mariological emphases of the Council, namely, that devotion to Our Lady should always be directed to Christ, the Incarnate Wisdom who dwelt in Mary's womb, and never isolated from him:

We would not however wish this biblical imprint to be merely a diligent use of texts and symbols skillfully selected from the Sacred Scriptures. More than this is necessary. What is needed is that texts of prayers and chants should draw their inspiration and their wording from the Bible, and above all that devotion to the Blessed Virgin should be imbued with the great themes of the Christian message. This will ensure that, as they venerate the Seat of Wisdom, the faithful in their turn will be enlightened by the divine word, and to live their lives in accordance with the precepts of the Incarnate Wisdom.<sup>22</sup>

### (b) Other Interventions

In many minor allocutions and messages Paul VI returned to the theme of Scripture in the Liturgy. In a radio message to a German Church gathering (6 September 1964) he stressed that Scripture is at the basis of theology and of the liturgy,<sup>23</sup> The importance of the Liturgy of the Word was highlighted in discourses of 26 March 1969 and 22 November 1969, during the year the new rite of Mass was promulgated.<sup>24</sup> Also, the Council's teaching that all the faithful "should have easy access to the Scriptures, in the liturgy, through the Scripture readings and the homily," was recalled in an address to a congress of Catholic Biblical Societies on 16 April 1969.<sup>25</sup>

In a Wednesday audience of 1 July 1970, devoted to the value of Scripture, the Pope emphasized once again the Council's teaching on the Church's twofold veneration for the Scriptures and the Eucharist, "never failing to nourish herself — above all in the sacred Liturgy — from the Bread of Life received from the table both of the Word of God and the Body of Christ, which she then offers to the faithful."<sup>26</sup>

In the same audience, which took place shortly after the promulgation of the revised Roman Missal, Paul VI stressed the added importance of listening to the proclamation of Scripture, "especially now that the liturgical reform has given such honor, and such a prominent position, to the Word of God."<sup>27</sup> And in his final audience to the liturgical *Consilium* which had produced the new Missal (10 April 1970), the Pope congratulated the members for integrating Scripture into the Church's worship in such a way as to give greater theological depth to the liturgy: "In a particular way you have striven to ensure that a greater place is given to the Word of God contained in the Sacred Scriptures, thereby providing theology with greater resources in the liturgical texts. The result is that the *lex orandi* resonates more clearly with the *lex credendi*."<sup>28</sup>

<sup>21</sup> "Hodie christianam pietatem iam ubique efflagitare intellegitur, ut indicia et cogitata biblica inserantur in quamvis cultus formam. Progressio enim studiorum biblicorum, crebrior et communior Sacrarum Scripturarum usus et potissimum exemplum traditionis atque interior Spiritus impulsio movent nostrae aetatis christianos et monent, ut magis magisque Sacra Biblia usurpent tamquam primum precationis librum indeque solida derivent agendi consilia et praeclara exempla" (AAS 66 [1974] 141).

<sup>22</sup> "Verumtamen nolimus, ut hic afflatus biblicus solo circumscribatur usu locorum et signorum etiam scienter excerptorum ex Litteris sacris; multo namque plus secum infert. Poscit enim, ut ex Libris sacris vocabula et sententiae deducantur in ipsas precationis formulas atque textus cantui destinatos; et ante omnia postulat, ut Virginis cultus pervadatur et repleatur maximis illis argumentis nuntii christiani, ut, dum christifideles Sedem Sapientiae venerantur, ipsi vicissim illuminentur Verbi divini luce atque adducantur, ut secundum praecepta Sapientiae incarnatae se ipsi gerant" (*ibid.*, 142).

<sup>23</sup> Cf. AAS 56 [1964] 819.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *Ins.* 1969, 899, 751-752.

<sup>25</sup> AAS 61 (1969) 311.

<sup>26</sup> "... non mancando mai, soprattutto nella sacra Liturgia, di nutrirsi del Pane della vita dalla mensa sia della Parola di Dio che del Corpo di Cristo, e di porgerlo ai fedeli" (*Ins.* 1970, 692, referring to Vatican II, *Dei Verbum* 21).

<sup>27</sup> "... soprattutto, ora che la riforma liturgica ha dato tanto posto e tanto onore alla Parola di Dio" (*Ins.*, loc. cit.).

<sup>28</sup> "Peculiari vero modo contendistis, ut amplior locus daretur verbo Dei, quod Sacris Biblicis continetur, ut theologia maiorem vim haberet ad

Shortly after that, on 14 July 1971, the Pope told the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate that “the Sacred Writings . . . must pervade our theology and our liturgy”;<sup>29</sup> then, on 17 March 1972, in greeting the scholars who had produced a new Italian translation of the Bible, he praised “the efforts made in the liturgical reform, stimulated by the recent Second Vatican Council, to ensure that the proclamation of the selected biblical texts will resound fittingly in the celebration of divine worship.”<sup>30</sup>

In addressing the Italian Episcopal Conference several months later (17 June 1972), Pope Paul could speak of the “wonderful enrichment of biblical knowledge” which had come with the liturgical reform.<sup>31</sup> Toward the end of his pontificate, the Pope returned to this theme. In a long, impassioned letter of 11 October 1976 to Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, pleading with him to obey the Successor of Peter, he defended the liturgical reform (which the traditionalist French prelate scathingly denounced) by highlighting first and foremost that biblical aspect which, as we have seen, he had stressed as Cardinal Montini sixteen years earlier in his hopes for the forthcoming Council: “The work of restoration has enabled the faithful to be more abundantly nourished by the Word of God; and while they participate more actively in the Liturgy, the priest’s role of acting ‘in the person of Christ’ remains intact.”<sup>32</sup> Finally, in his last Consistory address (27 June 1977), he stressed to the College of Cardinals that one of the “fruits” of the liturgical reform was the “better and wider knowledge of the inexhaustible treasury of Sacred Scripture.”<sup>33</sup>

We can see from this survey that Paul VI exhibited a long and consistent record, dating from the years prior to his election to the See of Peter, of promoting, encouraging, and emphasizing at every opportunity the value of the greatly extended use of Sacred Scripture that became such a major feature of the post-conciliar liturgical reform. Indeed, it seems clear that, in his mind, this was the most important and valuable single feature of the reform. With the hindsight of half a century, during which time we have seen much perturbation in the Church over the revised Roman liturgy, we may add that this biblical aspect of the reform has probably been its least controversial and most widely appreciated feature. Complaints on the part of traditionalist Catholics against the new lectionary, in favor of the ancient one-year cycle of Scripture readings found in the Tridentine Missal, have been far less vehement, and far less frequent, than their denunciations of other features of the Pauline reform which they claim render the Eucharistic liturgy too ‘man-centred’, informal, and prejudicial to the sacrificial character of the Mass. Benedict XVI, critical though he has been of some aspects of the way the Council’s Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy has been implemented, has strongly endorsed the new Pauline lectionary.<sup>34</sup> It seems likely that, whatever future developments occur in the Roman Rite, this extended use and emphasis on Sacred Scripture in Catholic worship may prove to be Pope Paul’s most lasting contribution, and, arguably, even the most important long-term gift of his pontificate to the life of the Church.

---

*liturgicos textus atque adeo lex orandi cum lege credendi aptius concineret*” (AAS 62 [1970] 273).

<sup>29</sup> *Ins.* 1971, 630.

<sup>30</sup> “. . . lo sforzo, perseguito dalla riforma liturgica, voluta dal recente Concilio ecumenico vaticano secondo, di dare degna voce all’annuncio dei testi biblici, scelti per la celebrazione del culto divino” (*Ins.* 1972, 257).

<sup>31</sup> “. . . mirabile arricchimento della conoscenza della Parola di Dio” (AAS 64 [1972] 489).

<sup>32</sup> “*Quod quidem instaurationis opus efficit, ut fideles verbo Dei abundantius pascantur; qui dum Liturgiam actuosius participant, tamen munus sacerdotis, ‘in persona Christi agentis’, integrum manet*” (*Ins.* 1976, 818).

<sup>33</sup> “. . . maiorem ampliorem cognitionem thesaurorum inexhaustorum Sacrae Scripturae” (AAS 69 [1977] 373).

<sup>34</sup> One of the relatively few voices that have been raised insistently in favor of returning to the much smaller set of Scripture readings embodied in the traditional Roman Missal has been that of Dr. Robert Moynihan, editor of the monthly magazine *Inside The Vatican*. Moynihan has recalled that some twenty years ago he advocated the older one-year cycle of readings in an interview with the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, but found that then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger disagreed, firmly defending the new lectionary. Cf. *The Moynihan Report*, October 12, 2012, Letter #28, “The Old Mass Returns to St. Peter’s” (accessed on 10/20/12 at <http://moynihanreport.com>).