

THE TEXT MATTERS

What is the “mystery of faith” that has been referenced in every *Novus Ordo* Mass since its promulgation in Advent, 1969?

(Typically, this required further prompting, like “Father says these words at every Mass.” The answer given by high school sophomores before the 2011 new translations was “Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.” After the new translation, one of the acclamations is offered.)

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Given this text:

Accipite et bibite ex eo omnes. Hic est enim Calix Sanguinis Mei, novi et aeterni testamenti, Mysterium Fidei, qui pro vobis et pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum.

Accept and drink from this all of you. For this is the Chalice of My Blood, of the new and eternal covenant, the Mystery of Faith, which will be poured out for you and for many for the remission of sins.

What is the “mystery of faith” referenced here?

This is the text of the TLM.

(When the question on the above slide was revealed, a brief silence ensued while the students “backed into” - Mystery of Faith = Chalice of My Blood = Real Presence. The actual mystery here is that of Transubstantiation, which has just occurred, but I was always satisfied with the “Real Presence” response.)

For a timely (9/3/65) discussion of “Mysterium Fidei” see Paul VI’s encyclical of the same name. A few excerpts:

1. The Mystery of Faith, that is, the ineffable gift of the Eucharist that the Catholic Church received from Christ, her Spouse, as a pledge of His immense love, is something that she has always devoutly guarded as her most precious treasure, and during the Second Vatican Council she professed her faith and veneration in a new and solemn declaration.

10. For We can see that some of those who are dealing with this Most Holy Mystery (“the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist”) in speech and writing are disseminating opinions on Masses celebrated in private or on the dogma of transubstantiation that are disturbing the minds of the faithful and causing them no small measure of confusion about matters of faith, just as if it were all right for someone to take doctrine that has already been defined by the Church and consign it to oblivion or else interpret it in such a way as to weaken the genuine meaning of the words or the recognized force of the concepts involved.

15. First of all, We want to recall something that you know very well but that is absolutely necessary if the virus of every kind of rationalism is to be repelled; it is something that many illustrious martyrs have witnessed to with their blood, something that celebrated fathers and Doctors of the Church have constantly professed and taught. We mean the fact that the Eucharist is a very great mystery—in fact, properly speaking and in the words of the Sacred Liturgy, the mystery of faith. “It contains within it,” as Leo XIII, Our predecessor of happy memory, very wisely remarked, “all supernatural realities in a remarkable richness and variety of miracles.”

24. And so the rule of language which the Church has established through the long labor of centuries, with the help of the Holy Spirit, and which she has confirmed with the authority of the Councils, and which has more than once been the watchword and banner of orthodox faith, is to be religiously preserved, and no one may presume to change it at his own pleasure or under the pretext of new knowledge.

Removing the words “mysterium fidei” from the Consecration (where they had been since before 600AD) has served to diminish belief in the Real Presence - an article of faith for Catholics.

Inserting proclamations / acclamations by the laity just after the most solemn moment in the Mass trivializes what just happened at the hands of the priest, especially when the content of those texts has nothing to do with the Real Presence / Transubstantiation.

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Using this example of “Mysterium Fidei” - what principle have we just demonstrated about the importance of how we pray?

(While this principal was referenced in a previous quote from Benedict XVI, it expects too much of the sophomores.)

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LEX ORANDI, LEX CREDENDI

From *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (emphasis mine):

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The Church’s faith precedes the faith of the believer who is invited to adhere to it. When the Church celebrates the sacraments, she confesses the faith received from the apostles – whence the ancient saying:

lex orandi, lex credendi (or: *legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi*, according to Prosper of Aquitaine [5th cent.]). The law of prayer is the law of faith: the Church believes as she prays. Liturgy is a constitutive element of the holy and living Tradition.

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For this reason no sacramental rite may be modified or manipulated at the will of the minister or the community. Even the supreme authority in the Church may not change the liturgy arbitrarily, but only in the obedience of faith and with religious respect for the mystery of the liturgy.

The Latin in parentheses may be translated as “the rule of praying determines the rule of believing”. That is, what we say (and how we say it) in our prayers, determines what each of us believes. If you change the words of the prayer, you change (over time) the belief of the one who prays. Changes should not be fabricated by liturgists, they should evolve from the community of the faithful and the living tradition of the Church. Any changes to the liturgy must be made very carefully so that, as Benedict says a “hermeneutic of continuity” is maintained. This was NOT done after Vatican Council II. The “work was rushed,” the results, “catastrophic.” How many other Catholics think the singular Mystery of Faith is one of the several acclamations?

Recall the earlier retrospective quote from then Cardinal Ratzinger -

“...the crisis in the Church that we are experiencing today is to a large extent due to the disintegration of the liturgy.”

St. John Henry Newman (for whom the Newman Centers on college campuses are named), in his sermon Ceremonies of the Church warned against changing liturgical forms:

“Granting that the forms are not immediately from God, still long use has made them divine to us; for the spirit of religion has so penetrated and quickened them, that to destroy them is, in respect of the multitude of men, to unsettle and dislodge the religious principle itself. In most minds usage has so identified them with the notion of religion, that the one cannot be extirpated without the other. Their faith will not bear transplanting.”

I can attest from personal experience to Newman’s insight. My faith did not bear “transplanting” from the TLM to the *Novus Ordo Missae*. Shallow thinker that I was at 24, I did not understand the reason. There were many more like me, “the multitude of men,” and, sadly, many of them still don’t know what happened.

(The final section addresses some common complaints from first-time attendees at a Traditional Latin Mass.)