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St. Cecilia's Abbey,

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11th. September, '75.

Dear Mr. Johnson,

Thank you very much for the newspapers you sent, and in particular for the article about Fr. Baker and the protestations at Downham. There was a clear and accurate account in the "Universe" also.

The whole matter must be one of pain and difficulty for your Bishop, and we will certainly keep him - and all concerned - in our prayers.

You ask what Mother Abbess' opinion is; and she would like me to say that seems quite clear that the root of the trouble at Downham

is not the use of Latin, but the disobedience of Fr. Baker to the authority of the Holy See and the Hierarchy of England & Wales, by persisting to use the Mass-rite of the Missal of Pope Paul V, when this has been officially abrogated and replaced by the new "Missale Romanum" promulgated by Pope Paul VI in April 1969.

This reformed rite of the Mass can be beautifully, reverently, validly and legitimately performed in Latin. This we do here at our Abbey Church, singing all the parts in Gregorian Chant. For this we have the full knowledge and approval of our Bishop. We are

wholehearted in our loyalty and obedience to the Holy See and to the Hierarchy.

There are many Catholics who have been understandably upset by changes in the way of celebrating the Mass since Vatican II Council.

They were not prepared for the changes, not instructed as to the reasons why, were not assisted towards a more active and fruitful participation. Some priests are to be blamed for arbitrary experimenting, and for introducing some practices which led to a diminution of reverence in worship. Hence the longing for some for the old familiar Latin Mass of the Pius V Missal; and some of the accusations of doctrinal error or invalidity in the new rite.

All the objections made to

the new rite have been thoroughly and accurately investigated and refuted in a scholarly work just published by a Benedictine monk of Solesmes in France. He establishes that the Missale Romanum of Pope Paul VI has been truly and validly promulgated, and the old Missal of Pius V abrogated. The new rite in Latin is valid and free from any doctrinal error. All Catholics who wish to remain in communion with the See of Peter must accept the Pope's ruling in this matter.

We do hope that this helps to clarify the situation a little for you. For all those who are uncertain and suffering on account of the liturgical changes, we pray most sincerely for the light of the Holy Spirit. May God bless you.

Yours sincerely in Christ, Sr. Bede.