

Addressee redacted.

As you can imagine, my incoming post is so massive (& postage a financial burden) that I have not replied to the kind of letter you so rightly, and generously, deplore. But your own letter demands at least an acknowledgment. I wish I had more time to develop the points you raise more fully.

Your central point is the inadequacy of the New Order of the Mass in comparison with the so-called Tridentine Rite. This is, within a limited framework, something that can be genuinely and sincerely debated. But it was the subject of extended and profound discussion and debate at Vatican II, resulting in the promulgation of the Constitution on the Sacred Piturgy in 1963. It is this document which grounds the Apostolic Letter of Pope Paul in April, 1969. The universal episcopate declared the Constitution to be the mind of the living Church. What consequences can be drawn from this?

More at home, Fr. Baker has known the directive (= decree) of the Hierarchy of 1970. There are, as you rightly note, possible exceptions - but not such as to provoke disunity in the Church and, in any case, these exceptions are heavily circumscribed.

I am very conscious of the anguish of some faithful on these changes. It was a factor that urged Bishop Grant to wait and wait and do all in his power to persuade. Fr. Baker - and particularly some irresponsible persons who are "policy-making" for his behaviour - has, whether deliberately or not, put his bishop in an impossible position. Even now the bishop has declared his intention of using those processes of canon law that, however tedious and time-consuming, allow the individual extensive right of appeal. He could easily have acted summarily.

I do take your point of lack of charity. God forgive us all.

I ask your prayers for a suffering Church.

Yours sincerely,

(signed) + Alan C. Clark