



Foederatio Internationalis *Una Voce*

Positio N. 8

PREFACES

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From the General Introduction

These papers, commissioned by the International Federation *Una Voce*, are offered to stimulate and inform debate about the 1962 Missal among Catholics ‘attached to the ancient Latin liturgical tradition’, and others interested in the liturgical renewal of the Church. They are not to be taken to imply personal or moral criticism of those today or in the past who have adopted practices or advocated reforms which are subjected to criticism. In composing these papers we adopt the working assumption that our fellow Catholics act in good will, but that nevertheless a vigorous and well-informed debate is absolutely necessary if those who act in good will are to do so in light of a proper understanding of the issues.

The authors of the papers are not named, as the papers are not the product of any one person, and also because we prefer them to be judged on the basis of their content, not their authorship.

The International Federation *Una Voce* humbly submits the opinions contained in these papers to the judgement of the Church.

Prefaces: Abstract

Although there are a great many Latin Prefaces dating from the early Middle Ages, the Roman Rite is historically characterised by a very limited number: the Hadrianum contained 14; from the late 11th Century until 1919 there were 12; four were added between 1919 and 1928. In addition a few extra Prefaces are permitted for religious orders or certain places. The small number of Prefaces, the lack of choice between Prefaces for a particular Mass, and their restrained Latin style, are all characteristic of the ancient Latin liturgical tradition represented by the 1962 Missal, and there is little precedent for adding to their number, even for important new feasts. The Prefaces of the 1970 Missal, of which there are 82, are distinct in function as well as style, being designed to complement the new Eucharistic Prayers, and composed with a distinct sequence of prayers in mind, in which, by contrast with the ancient Roman tradition, the Preface has no intercessory role. The possibility of adding new Prefaces to the 1962 Missal does not seem to us to fulfil the criterion of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* that ‘the good of the Church genuinely and certainly requires’ a liturgical change, particularly while the Extraordinary Form is still at an early stage of adoption in the mainstream of the Church’s liturgical life.

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FIUV Position Paper 8: Prefaces

1. In the Letter to Bishops accompanying the motu proprio *Summorum Pontificum* (2007), the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI refers to study of the ‘practical possibilities’ of adding Prefaces to the Extraordinary Form, and to consultation of ‘bodies devoted to the *usus antiquior*’ on this question.¹ This paper is a response to that call for study and consultation. The discussion needs, first, to be informed by the history of the question, and secondly by an understanding of the criteria of organic development.

The Historical Question

2. Our information about the Missals in use in Rome (or elsewhere) before the 9th century is very patchy, and what documents exist cannot be assumed to be exhaustive. The classical, and most influential, representative of the Roman Rite of this early period is nevertheless the 8th century ‘Hadrianum’,² which had fourteen Prefaces (see Appendix, 1).
3. By contrast, many other Missals and collections of liturgical texts from 7th to the 11th centuries include a great many Prefaces.³ These clearly had the function of giving a Mass a very specific intention; they might be regarded as ‘proper’ prayers. The definitive modern collection of Latin Prefaces, the *Corpus Praefationum*, has 1,674 in total.⁴
4. Nevertheless, a small body of Prefaces began to become standard in the 11th century, quite probably in response to the ‘false decretal of Pelagius II,’ which authorises only nine, presumably in addition to the Common Preface. This document, while presenting itself as a late 6th century decretal, is probably from the 11th century.⁵ Regardless of its origin, it was included in later canon law collections.⁶ It suggests, quite possibly correctly, that the ancient Roman practice was to have a very limited number of Prefaces.
5. To the list given by the ‘false decretal’ the Preface of the Blessed Virgin Mary was added in the late 11th century (though this itself was based on an 8th century Preface). These, plus the

¹ Letter to Bishops accompanying the motu proprio *Summorum Pontificum* (2007) ‘the two Forms of the usage of the Roman Rite can be mutually enriching: new Saints and some of the new Prefaces can and should be inserted in the old Missal. The “Ecclesia Dei” Commission, in contact with various bodies devoted to the *usus antiquior*, will study the practical possibilities in this regard.’

² The Sacramentary sent by Pope Adrian I (772-795) to Charlemagne at the latter’s request, which formed the basis of Alcuin of York’s reform of the Frankish liturgy.

³ The Leonine Sacramentary (*Sacramentarium Veronense*, ed. L. C. Mohlberg, Rome, Herder 1966) from about the beginning of the 7th century, contains more than 240 Prefaces (the exact number depends on how near-duplicates are counted; it may be as many as 268; furthermore, it is arranged calendrically, but the period from January to mid April is missing). However, while including Roman material this is a collection from many Italian sources, and is a collection rather than a book to be used in a specific church or diocese. The ‘old’ Gelasian Sacramentary, containing Roman, Frankish and other material and produced near Paris c.750, (*Liber Sacramentorum Romanae Aecclesiae ordinis anni circuli*, ed. L. C. Mohlberg with L Eizenhöfer and Peter Siffrin, Rome, Herder 1960) has 53 Prefaces; the Angoulême Sacramentary contains about 219 Prefaces (this figure includes some near-repetitions, but there are also some lacunae). St Gall 348 had 48 different Prefaces in its original version, to which the re-worked version added a further 175.

⁴ The collection includes new Prefaces published up to 1969.

⁵ That this text is an invention by Burchard himself is reasonably suspected by B. Capelle, *Les origines de la Préface romaine de la Vierge*, *Rev d’histoire Eccl* 38 (1942) 46-58 at p. 47.

⁶ *Corpus Iuris Canonici* (*Decretum Gratiani* III 1,71 (Friedberg, I 1313); cf Durandus, IV, 33, 35),

Common Preface and the Preface in the *Missa sicca* for blessing the palms on Palm Sunday, are the only Prefaces found in the Roman Missals of 1474 and 1570. Of these, seven are found in the Hadrianum, and three derive from ancient Frankish sources (see Appendix, 3).

6. In this later period other Rites and Usages of the Latin Church sometimes had a few additional Prefaces. Exceptionally, eight Prefaces not found in the Roman Missal were included in the Paris Missal of 1738 (see Appendix, 4), which was an attempt to preserve a distinctive Gallican Rite in the Latin Church. These probably include new compositions.
7. Between 1919 and 1928 four Prefaces were added to the Roman Missal. One, the Preface for the Dead (1919), came from the Paris Missal of 1738; the others, for St Joseph (1919), Christ the King (1925), and the Sacred Heart (1928), were new compositions. Each was introduced in the context of wider liturgical developments: the revision of the liturgies of All Souls⁷ and the Sacred Heart,⁸ the creation of the Feast of Christ the King,⁹ and the development of devotion to St Joseph.¹⁰ The 1955 revision of Holy Week used an ancient Preface for the new Chrism Mass (while the Preface for the '*Missa sicca*' for the blessing of palms disappeared). Particular editions of the 1962 Missal include Prefaces authorised for particular places or religious orders; the best know are the four 'Gallican Prefaces', authorised for countries of Gallican heritage (see Appendix, 7).
8. A decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites of 1968 introduced eight further Prefaces.¹¹ One is (almost unchanged) of ancient origin; the others are either significantly redacted or are new compositions. This decree also added new Eucharistic Prayers. The 1970 Missal included 82 Prefaces; the majority are new compositions, with a variety of texts as their inspiration. Some Prefaces found in the 1962 Missal and the 1968 decree were abandoned or re-written.

The Question of Organic Development

9. The Constitution on the Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, sets out criteria for authentic liturgical development. After noting the importance of historical research and pastoral considerations, it says:

⁷ It follows the reform of the liturgy of All Souls by Pope St Pius X, which created a complete Office for the feast for the first time, raised its rank, and permitted priests to celebrate three Masses.

⁸ The formulary of the feast of the Most Sacred Heart was thoroughly revised, with specially written chants, in 1928.

⁹ The Feast of Christ the King was established by Pius XI's encyclical *Quas primas* in 1925.

¹⁰ The liturgical honour given to St Joseph presents a continuously developing history. His feast is not found in the Roman Missal before the 15th Century; the feast of St Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary ('Iustus et palma', 19th March), found in the Roman Missal of 1570, was made a Holy Day of Obligation by Pope Clement XI in 1714. A feast of St Joseph Patron of the Church ('Adjutor et protector') was created by Pope Pius IX in 1847; this was moved from the third Sunday after Easter to the third Wednesday after Easter by Pius X, who added an Octave. This latter feast disappeared from the calendar, while being retained as a Votive Mass for use on Wednesdays, in favour of a new feast of St Joseph the Worker ('Sapientia reddidit'), which was created by Pope Pius XII in 1955, for the 1st May. Bl. Pope John XXIII inserted St Joseph into the Canon of the Mass in 1962. The promulgation of a Preface, to be used on his feast days and votive Masses, in 1919, is part of this wider development.

¹¹ *Preces Eucharisticae*, Notitiae, 40, May-June 1968, p.156

there must be no innovations unless the good of the Church genuinely and certainly requires them; and care must be taken that any new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already existing.¹²

These are necessary conditions for any liturgical development, not merely considerations among others. Bearing these in mind, we can make certain observations.

10. A relatively small number of Prefaces may be described as characteristic of the ancient liturgical tradition of the Roman Rite. As noted above, the Hadrianum had fourteen; from the 11th Century until 1919 there were twelve; four more were added in the early 20th Century. This accords with the general character of restraint and austerity characteristic of the Roman Rite, reflected also in its limited lectionary, single Eucharistic Prayer, and so on. In style, also, the Prefaces of the Roman Rite are restrained and austere by comparison with those found in Gallican and other sources. As the liturgical scholar Adrian Fortescue expressed it:

The chief note in the Roman rite has always been its austere simplicity. That is still its essential note, compared with the florid Eastern rites. It is surely worth while to preserve this note externally also, to repress any Byzantine tendencies in our ceremonies.¹³

Contrary, perhaps, to Fortescue's critical tone, it should be emphasised that what is of value in one liturgical tradition does not necessarily correspond to something defective in another. The same ultimate ends—the worship of God and the salvation of souls—can be served by distinct means. What is to be emphasised here is simply that the simplicity and austerity of the Roman liturgical tradition is a means to those ends which is worthy of preservation, as is everything which has developed under the guidance of Providence in the Church's liturgical traditions.¹⁴ This simplicity has practical advantages, notably in making possible Missals which are both comprehensive and easily portable,¹⁵ and in facilitating a thorough familiarity with the texts of the Missal by the laity, with important implications for liturgical participation.¹⁶

11. There is little precedent for adding Prefaces to the Roman Missal. None were added between the 11th Century and the 20th, although these centuries saw many important new feasts and devotional developments. The importance of stability in the liturgy should also be stressed: it enables the faithful to continue to use the same books, and grow in familiarity with the Missal over a lifetime, united in their liturgical experience with their predecessors and successors.
12. It has often happened in the development of the Roman Rite that long-established local usages have become universal, and this principle could be applied to the Gallican and other local Prefaces, or those authorised for religious orders. The question remains, however, as to the urgency of such a development, in the context both of the need for stability in the liturgical books of the Extraordinary Form, as they are just beginning to establish themselves in wider usage in the Church, and the difference of spirit between the Gallican and the Roman styles. It seems entirely appropriate, by contrast, that the Gallican Prefaces continue

¹² *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 23

¹³ Adrian Fortescue 'Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described' (London: Burns Oates, 1936) p.xix

¹⁴ Recalling Pope Benedict XVI: 'It behoves all of us to preserve the riches which have developed in the Church's faith and prayer, and to give them their proper place.' (Letter to Bishops accompanying the *Motu Proprio Summorum Pontificum*, 2007); cf. Pope Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*, 61, on liturgical development over time: the 'Holy Spirit... assists the Church in every age even to the consummation of the world. They [sc. rites developed over time] are equally the resources used by the majestic Spouse of Jesus Christ to promote and procure the sanctity of man.'

¹⁵ Both Altar Missals (such as those used by military chaplains) and the pocket-sized handmissals for the laity.

¹⁶ See Positio 7, 'Latin as a Liturgical Language'

to be used in countries of Gallican heritage, and by parallel, that other Prefaces authorised for particular places or religious orders for special reasons continue in use in those places and orders.

13. The most cautious course might seem to be to make them universally optional; however, it should be noted that it is part of the character of the Extraordinary Form that options are generally minimised;¹⁷ indeed, there is no precedent for optional Prefaces in modern times.¹⁸ A multiplicity of options both makes it harder for the faithful to follow the liturgy, and tends to subject the liturgy to the personality of the priest. The Holy Father has written about the danger of liturgical ‘creativity’:
God is less and less in the picture. More and more important is what is done by human beings who meet here and do not like to subject themselves to a “pre-determined pattern”.¹⁹
14. The possibility of introducing Prefaces composed for the 1970 Missal into the Extraordinary Form presents the difficulties just mentioned, and another particular difficulty, which is the change in the role of the Preface between the two Missals.
15. One reason for this is that the ancient Latin liturgical tradition has many points in common with the ancient Rite of Alexandria, especially when it is recalled that the Preface and Roman Canon predate the insertion of the Sanctus.²⁰ In these traditions, the Preface has an intercessory, and not just a eucharistic (thanksgiving) role. The Missal of 1970, by contrast, employs Eucharistic Prayers mainly derived from (or modelled on) those other Eastern Rites, in which the intercessions are part of the Eucharistic Prayer and not the Preface.²¹ Thus, like many ancient Latin Prefaces, the Preface of the Apostles in the 1962 Missal is ‘deprecatory’: it entreats the Lord ‘do not desert Thy flock’.²² In the 1970 Missal this Preface has been re-written to remove its deprecatory character.²³

¹⁷ Prior to 1956 there were opportunities for optional extra collects, and more opportunities for the use, at the celebrant’s discretion, of Votive Masses, than is the case with the rubrics of 1962. The reduction of options certainly had the advantage of making the following of Mass by the Faithful with a hand missal simpler.

¹⁸ Prior to the Decree of 1759 which mandated the Preface of the Trinity for green Sundays, there seems to have been some variation in practice between the use of Trinity Sunday and the Common Preface for those Sundays. This needn’t imply a free choice for the priest, however, rather than different local customs. The provision of multiple Prefaces for a given Mass, in the liturgical books of the earlier period noted in paragraph 3, in some cases does suggest such a choice, though in others it may again simply record local customs.

¹⁹ Pope Benedict XVI (Joseph, Cardinal Ratzinger) ‘The Spirit of the Liturgy’ (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000) pp79-80: ‘Now the priest ... becomes the real reference point for the whole liturgy. Everything depends on him. We have to see him, respond to him, to be involved in what he is doing. His creativity sustains the whole thing. Not surprisingly, people try to reduce this newly created role by assigning all kinds of liturgical functions to different individuals... God is less and less in the picture. More and more important is what is done by human beings who meet here and do not like to subject themselves to a “pre-determined pattern”.’

²⁰ The Sanctus appeared in the Roman Rite probably in the 430s.

²¹ This is confirmed by the discussion of intercessions by the ‘General Instruction of the Roman Missal’ (2002), 79

²² Preface of the Apostles: ‘It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, suppliantly to entreat you, Lord, that you, eternal Shepherd, do not desert your flock, but that through your blessed Apostles you watch over it and protect it always, so that it may be governed by those you have appointed shepherds to lead it in the name of {as representatives in/substitutes for} your work. And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, as we sing the hymn of your glory without end we acclaim.’ (‘Vere dignum et iustum est, aequum et salutare: Te, Domine suppliciter exorare, ut gregem tuum pastor aeternae, non deseras: sed per beatos apostolos tuos continua protectione custodias.’)

²³ Preface of the Apostles, 1970 Missal, 2011 English translation ‘It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God. For you,

16. Again, the Prefaces in the 1970 Missal were designed for use with Eucharistic Prayers II and III,²⁴ which are much shorter than the Roman Canon, to complement them, and, as Cardinal Lercaro noted at the time, the reform aimed
to make the Eucharistic Prayer more of a single unit that includes the preface, *Sanctus*, and anamnesis.²⁵
17. Such considerations rendered the great majority of ancient Latin Prefaces unsuitable for the 1970 Missal, despite their great abundance.²⁶ It would seem logical that the reverse would also be true: that the Prefaces of the 1970 Missal are not appropriate for the 1962 Missal.

Conclusion

18. At the heart of the issue is the preservation of the authentic spirit of the ancient Latin liturgical tradition,²⁷ by reference both to general principles of organic development, and to the desire of the Holy Father
to preserve the riches which have developed in the Church's faith and prayer, and to give them their proper place.²⁸
It is interesting to note, in this regard, the decision of the Holy Father, wishing to replace the Prayer for the Jews in the Good Friday liturgy, not to insert the equivalent prayer from the 1970 Missal, but to compose one more conformable to the liturgical context. In relation to Prefaces, this tradition is characterised, for good reasons, by a particular Latin style, by a very limited number of Prefaces, and by a very limited number of options.
19. Our final conclusion is in favour of a moratorium on new Prefaces. It does not seem to us that there is any urgency about adding new Prefaces, or that the criterion of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, that the 'good of the Church genuinely and certainly requires' a change, has been met in this case. It must be recognised that after a period of unprecedented liturgical change over a short period of time, which has caused such confusion, long term damage, and suffering,²⁹ a period of tranquillity would seem practical and indeed essential, particularly in relation to anything which might seem a novelty. We may end with the words of the Holy Father:
A more important objection is of the practical order. Ought we really to be rearranging everything all over again? Nothing is more harmful to the liturgy than a constant activism, even if it seems to be for the sake of genuine renewal.³⁰

eternal Shepherd, do not desert your flock, but through the blessed Apostles watch over it and protect it always, so that it may be governed by those you have appointed shepherds to lead it in the name of your Son. And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominations, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, as we sing the hymn of your glory without end we acclaim:'

²⁴ Eucharistic Prayer IV, in the 1970 Missal, has a fixed Preface. See (Archbishop) Annibale Bugnini 'The Reform of the Roman Liturgy (1948-1975)' (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1990) p458.

²⁵ Bugnini, *op. cit.*, p450, quoting a 1966 memorandum of Cardinal Lercaro.

²⁶ See note 3 above.

²⁷ See also Positio 6: Liturgical Pluralism

²⁸ Letter to Bishops accompanying the Motu Proprio *Summorum Pontificum*

²⁹ Pope Benedict XVI, Letter to Bishops accompanying the Motu Proprio *Summorum Pontificum* (2007): 'I have seen how arbitrary deformations of the liturgy caused deep pain to individuals totally rooted in the faith of the Church.'

³⁰ 'The Spirit of the Liturgy' p83

APPENDIX

1. Prefaces in the Sacramentary of Pope Adrian I (the 'Hadrianum'): 14 in total

Common	in Natali Papae
Nativity	For ordination of a priest
Epiphany	For consecration of an altar
Easter	Nuptial Mass
Ascension	for St Andrew
Pentecost	Two for St Anastasia (one of which is
Apostles	really an extra one for the Nativity)

2. Prefaces mandated by the 'False Decretal of Pope Pelagius': 10 in total

<i>From the Hadrianum:</i>	<i>From Frankish sources:</i>
Easter	Trinity
Ascension	Cross
Pentecost	Lent
Nativity	
Epiphany	
Apostles	

(the Common Preface seems to be taken for granted)

3. Prefaces found in the Roman Missals of 1474 and 1570: 12 in total

<i>Included in the False Decretal:</i>	
Nativity	Apostles
Epiphany	Lent
Easter	the Cross
Ascension	Trinity
Pentecost	

Plus the Common Preface

Added in the 11th Century: Blessed Virgin Mary

Also: Preface for the Missa Sicca of Palm Sunday

4. Prefaces of the Paris Missal ('de Vintimille') of 1738: 19 in total

Advent	Maundy Thursday (& votive for the
Nativity	Blessed Sacrament)
Epiphany	Ascension
Lent	Pentecost
Cross	Trinity
Easter	Blessed Sacrament and Corpus Christi

Dedication of a church
Blessed Virgin Mary
Apostles
SS Dionysius, Rusticus & Eleutherius

Patrons and Titulars
Nuptial Mass
Common Preface
For the Dead

5. Prefaces added to the Roman Missal from 1919 to 1928: 4 in total

For the Dead
St Joseph
Christ the King
Sacred Heart of Jesus

(The Preface of the Dead was found in the Paris Missal of 1738, but probably derives from ancient sources.³¹)

6. Effect of the Holy Week Reform of 1955: 1 added and 1 removed

Preface of the Missa Sicca of Palm Sunday, lost
Ancient Preface used for Chrism Mass, added

7. Prefaces for use *pro aliquibus locis* and by religious orders in 1962.

Without giving an exhaustive list, religious orders tend to have prefaces for the feast of their founders. These include

St Benedict
St Augustine
St Francis de Sales
St Norbert*
St Dominic*

St John of the Cross*
St Teresa of Avila*
St Elias*
Our Lady of Mount Carmel*

**approved in or after 1919*

The Franciscan *Missale Romano-Seraphicum* has extra proper Prefaces for the feasts of St Francis, St Dominic, and St Clare.

A number of French dioceses have proper Prefaces, deriving from the neo-Gallican tradition (see Appendix, 4), notably Lyon, which not only has some for some saints, but also for

Advent
Maundy Thursday

Corpus Christi
the Dedication of a Church

³¹ The phrase “vita mutatur non tollitur” occurs in SG 908 (6th-7th century Visigothic), and 1738 may have got the whole text from some such source.

The dioceses of Spain have a proper Preface for the Feast of St Teresa of Avila.

In all the dioceses of France and Belgium four Prefaces from the Neo-Gallican Missal of 1738 are authorised:

Advent
Blessed Sacrament

All Saints/ SS Peter and Paul
Dedication of a Church