

LATIN LITURGY

The Journal of the Association for Latin Liturgy
No 161 – Pentecost 2022



*Solemn Mass according to the Missal of Paul VI,
at the church of St Thomas More, Bexleyheath*

OUR NEXT OPEN MEETING will be on **Saturday 2nd July 2022** at the Church of St Thomas More, Long Lane, Bexleyheath, DA7 5JW. All members and friends will be most welcome at this practical day of workshops and talks, where we will practise singing well known and simple Gregorian chants, and learn some new ones, with explanations of the special relevance of chant in today's Church. We shall then end the day by singing Benediction.

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Cover pictures: Solemn Mass at the Church of St Thomas More, Bexleyheath. Vignette from *The Offices and Ceremonies of Holy Week*, 1839 (see p. 24). Photo credits: (i) Tejomon Jose; (ii) the Editor.

OUR NEXT OPEN MEETING (continued from page 1): To explain the background to the day: the Parish Priest has introduced a full Latin Mass (apart from the readings and the Bidding Prayers), with a young and enthusiastic choir, who naturally need tuition and support. Fr Guy Nicholls will rehearse chants from the *Graduale Parvum* and other chants, most of which will be known to ALL members. The situation in the parish is precisely that for which the Association stands, and aims to help and promote, and as such it deserves support from as many members as can make the day. The church is not difficult to get to for anyone in London and south-east England, so please do come and support this very hard-working parish priest and his parishioners.

The fee for the day is £20 (free for children) including a buffet lunch, with a vegetarian option. Please book and pay on our website: <https://latin-liturgy.org/meetings> or by using the enclosed form and sending it with a cheque to ALL, 4a Kelvin

Road, Thorneywood, Nottingham NG3 2PR. Children should be booked by email using our Contact page.

For advice on **how to get there**, please see the booking form enclosed with this edition of *Latin Liturgy*.

22nd October 2022: Day at St Mary's University, Twickenham

We give here the programme for the day as currently planned, but we will include a final version and full booking information in the next edition of *Latin Liturgy* and on our website.

10.30 am Welcome & coffee

10.50 Practice of music for Mass

11.30 Solemn Mass

1.00 pm Lunch in the refectory

1.45 AGM in the Waldegrave Drawing Room

2.15 Talk by a staff member of the University

3.30 Practice of music for Benediction

4.00 Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament

4.30 Tea & departure

As usual, advanced booking will be necessary so that the caterers can be given the numbers for lunch, coffee etc.

As well as a full day of liturgy, music and much else, this will be the first time we've been able to hold our Annual General Meeting 'in real life' since our 50th at Corpus Christi Maiden Lane in September 2019. So please put the date in your diary now and **resolve to be there!**

From the Editor

And the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic. But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes. [Numbers XI 4 – 6]

Every analogy can be carried too far, and I will try not to do that with this one. If we think of this quotation as a parable of the current liturgical situation in which we find ourselves, different people will interpret it in different ways: for example the fish, the cucumbers and the melons might be, for some, the pre-1955 rites of Holy Week, while for others – perhaps for many of our members – the leeks, the onions and the garlic might be a *novus ordo* Mass sung entirely in Latin and celebrated with due solemnity *versus Deum*. And if manna were to represent only subsistence, that might be an ordinary vernacular Mass, of the kind that sadly does nothing to raise up the heart and mind to God – but it keeps you alive. Finally, there will inevitably always be some who refuse to eat manna at all, and would rather starve: look well to the liturgical right, and you will see them.

On the other hand, we must not become precious about this, not least because emotional and subjective reactions to liturgy, to its language, and to liturgical change, often sit uneasily with the facts of the case, so that ‘tradition’ can be a two-edged sword. It’s worth remembering for example that many of the most exalted terms in Christian Latin, such as *ecclesia*, *fraternitas* and *communio* were regarded by well-spoken Romans as vulgarisms; that several important words such as *trinitas*, *incarnatio* and *salvatio* were neologisms, which had to be manufactured because there was no other way of expressing the concepts they represented; and that many other words, such as *angelus*, *apostolus*, and *baptisma*

were imported from Greek because Latin simply didn't have words for such things. In *A Man for all Seasons* someone says to Thomas More, when he begins to pray in Latin: "yes, let me hear that holy language". But Thomas replies "It isn't holy - just old".

But to return to our manna: at the moment those who hanker after the melons and the cucumbers are not popular with Rome or with most of the episcopate. Manna is what we must all eat now: it is democratic, non-elitist, and not tainted with nostalgia. There's nothing *wrong* with manna, of course, and when you're stuck in the desert for forty years you should be grateful for it. But you could be forgiven for wondering if, when those forty years are over, you might again taste those cucumbers and melons which you remember so fondly. The problem today is that those who have control of these matters are saying 'it's just manna now, for everyone and for every meal, and that's how it's going to stay'. It's not surprising, then, that there are murmurings among the people.

To mix our first metaphor with another, the Barque of Peter is a large, unwieldy and cumbersome vessel, crewed by all kinds of people, not all of whom get on with each other, and whose needs, in liturgy as well as in everything else, vary a great deal. The way things are going there is a danger, unless the skipper and his officers can be a little more generous with the rations provided for the crew, that some of them may be lost overboard - which would do the ship and its seaworthiness no good at all. **CF**

We print in this issue three exceptionally interesting 'Letters to the Editor'. They are not just what they say, but are parts of a dialogue between the members of the ALL, and by extension all other readers of this journal. And so the Editor encourages *you* to write, so that from this collective wisdom we may all benefit.

Further thoughts on *Traditionis Custodes*

[In *Latin Liturgy* 160 we published a collection of comments by members of the ALL Council on the promulgation of *Traditionis Custodes* ('TC') on 16th July 2021. The following article proposes some further elucidation on the subject.]

When promulgating *Summorum Pontificum* (SP) Pope Benedict XVI perhaps did little vigorously to promote use of the Extraordinary Form (EF) as he did not wish to cause the kind of liturgical dissension which accompanied the introduction of the Ordinary Form (OF), let alone the 'Churchquake' which followed *Humanae Vitae*. Also, there is a built-in problem (some might say credibility gap) with promoting SP, due to its claim (not made by either of the indults issued during the pontificate of Pope St. John Paul II on the use of the 1962 missal) that the EF was never abrogated. This would seem to contradict the final paragraph of the Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum* of 3rd April 1969, as well as the whole content of the 'Note on the Obligation to Use the New Roman Missal' *Conferentiarum Episcopaliū* of 28th October 1974 (See note 1). And, if the EF was never forbidden, why were clergy, for example Fr Oswald Baker at Downham Market, disciplined for using it?

The restrictions on SP given in TC are tragic but unsurprising, as some critics of the pontificate of Pope Francis (who also happen to be supporters of the EF) have used a style and tenor of critical language more redolent of an American radio 'shock-jock' than that appropriate for fraternal correction. As a result of the restrictions there will, possibly, be guilt by association for Catholics who want to celebrate/attend the OF in Latin. This is because most Catholics probably get their church information either from the Catholic media (not generally associated with being pro-Latin in any context) or from the secular mass media, whose busy journalists probably get their information from the

former. As a result, supporters of the OF in Latin will possibly be regarded by some other Catholics (and secular commentators) as hide-bound reactionaries (Note 2).

The OF has, arguably, not been given a fair trial by supporters of the EF. This is because few clergy have emulated places such as Westminster Cathedral (when Monsignor Bartlett was the Administrator), the English Oratory churches or Pluscarden and Ryde Abbeys, which, since the inception of the OF, have striven to implement it in an orthodox, prayerful and transcendent fashion, blending its participatory format with the best of the classical Roman liturgical tradition. The late Father Napier Cong. Orat. deserves a special mention here, not only for making the London Oratory a flagship for liturgical excellence, but also for ensuring that it did not become overly partisan with regard to either the EF or OF (Note 3).

Hence, few supporters of the EF have any knowledge of what can be done constructively with the OF, let alone any practical experience of it. With the benefit of hindsight, it can be argued that the issue of retaining the EF might not have arisen had the OF been implemented throughout the Church on the Oratorian-Pluscarden model. However, some such supporters of the EF, whilst prepared to condemn the OF almost out of hand, seem to have forgotten that many post-Modernists, such as Frs Kung and Rahner, were formed by the old seminary system and celebrated the EF.

The EF is a rite, not a magical charm or ju-ju which automatically confers orthodoxy on all its users. *Lex orandi, lex credendi* indeed, but the official documents of the Church, as well as her liturgy, must be examined for what she teaches. Other supporters of the EF are motivated by criticisms of the OF by scholars and writers such as Cardinals Ottaviani and Bacci, Mgr Gamber, and Michael Davies, as well as by allegations of Protestant involvement in

the construction of – and approval of – the OF, and by sensationalist claims about Archbishop Bugnini and Freemasonry. There is a need to clarify these issues.

A number of bishops have permitted the use of the EF to continue. It would be good to know their motives in doing so: has it been a desire not to be ‘told what to do’ by Rome, or to help preserve a spirit of liturgical dignity and peace? It would also be good to know their ages – I suspect that such bishops will have come from the ranks of clergy ordained in the 1980s and 1990s, rather than in the immediate aftermath of Vatican II. If so, perhaps we can hope – guardedly – for good things from the younger bishops.

The introduction of TC gives yet another impression of liturgical reform since the time of Pope Leo XIII being a piecemeal affair, with Rome being unable to make up its mind as to what it wants. Arguably, a period of prayerful reflection by Rome and her theologians is needed about how to proceed with reform. In Section 2 of Vatican II’s constitution *Sancrosanctum Concilium* of 4th December 1963, we are reminded that ‘it is through the liturgy, especially, that the faithful are enabled to express in their lives the mystery of Christ’. The logical inference from this is that sound Christology should be the basis of authentic liturgical content and reform, with especial attention to the point that the Incarnation was effected *non conversione divinitatis in carnem, sed assumptione humanitatis in Deum* as the Athanasian Creed (which should be reintroduced into the Sunday office in the Liturgy of the Hours) reminds us. If the essence of the EF is transcendence, that of the OF is participation. Both need to be blended in the spirit of that quotation.

NC

Notes: 1. The latter instruction can be found in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents* Gen. Ed. Austin Flannery O.P. (Pillar Books, 1975).

2. In her book *Manifesto: On Never Giving Up* (Hamish Hamilton 2021) Booker Prize winner Bernardine Evaristo makes some caustic comments about Catholicism and the Church, but is full of praise for the Tridentine liturgy which she experienced as a child.

3. One of the contributors to *Latin Liturgy* 160 mentioned omission of the bidding prayers and sign of peace at some Masses today. Regarding the former, one of the best formats I have encountered comes from pages 3 and 4 of the Church of England's *Series II Order for Holy Communion* (<http://www.oremus.org/liturgy/series2/hc-series2.pdf>) issued in 1967 and which could be adopted fruitfully by Catholic clergy today. Regarding the sign of peace, at Solemn Masses at the London Oratory in Father Napier's time this was always included, but performed by the congregation in a reverent way. Another contributor mentioned omission of the OT reading at some Masses. It is not clear if this is now permitted.

From the press

The Tablet is now the sole remaining printed Catholic weekly in Britain, and although it is not noticeably sympathetic to the forms of liturgy which the ALL exists to promote and defend, letters do occasionally appear in it which bring pressing questions about the liturgy, addressed to a readership which is mostly focused on other matters. On 6th January there were three such letters. The first was bitterly critical of the *Responsa* issued by Archbishop Roche to questions on *Traditionis Custodes*, noting that they come from a Vatican that speaks of 'co-existence in diversity'. The writer concludes, memorably, 'Smell of the sheep? I am

afraid the only smell that reaches me is the unmistakable whiff of hypocrisy'. The writers of the other two letters simply asked why some Catholics can't just be left alone to worship in the older rite if they want to.

On 5th February there was a letter from a priest correspondent criticising the use of the term 'Latin Mass' to refer to the Extraordinary Form. This Association has often said the same, and will continue to do so, and we would add that the term 'Traditional Latin Mass' is even more incorrect, and is actually meaningless. The writer of this letter added 'Latin is not the root cause of today's liturgical polarisation', but we are not so sure. One very unpleasant effect of TC is that there are now some bishops threatening their clergy by telling them that it's not only the old rite that is divisive, but even Latin in the newer rite. These bishops have no authority to say this, but that doesn't stop them.

The last letter to The Tablet which we will mention was written by Jeremy D Lampitt and appeared on 19th February: this pleased us very much by saying 'The Association for Latin Liturgy has been supporting this [the new rite in Latin] since 1969, with the patronage of the English Bishops'. He concludes that 'liturgical politicking' be kept out of the Mass 'where it does not belong'. We thank Mr Lampitt warmly for writing that letter!

CF

Letters to the Editor

Were the older liturgical books abrogated by Paul VI? Pope Paul surely intended to abrogate them and thought that he had abrogated them. The commission of cardinals who studied the question in 1986 concluded that he hadn't, but then John Paul II introduced new norms in 1988 in the form of an indult – implying that he considered them abrogated. Benedict said they were never abrogated; Francis has implied

that they were, and has permitted/authorised/ordered his officials to say explicitly that they were. I am sure that among our membership there will be some who think the books were abrogated, and some who think they weren't, and I can't see any very reliable criteria for deciding which position is correct.

It's not a question, then, on which the ALL should feel bound to 'pick a side'. In fact I think it's a question of mainly historical interest; after all, what Paul VI enacted has no binding power over his successors. In *Understanding the Mass*, discussing the question of whether *Quo primum* was abrogated, J D Crichton put this quite bluntly: "What Pius could do, Paul can undo." He was honest enough to put the inevitable corollary in a footnote: 'Paul XXVI could abrogate what Paul VI has done.' It seems to me, as a non-canonist, that in 2007 Benedict did abrogate whatever Paul VI had done (if indeed he had done anything) in 1969. So if Francis wants to ban what is now permitted, he ought to come out and say it in an unambiguous legislative document - which would be out of character.

I would hope that the Church will not let the current crisis go to waste, and that we could take a step back and consider how we got into this situation – a situation where the Popes have taken upon themselves the right to set aside millennial traditions on a personal initiative (almost, on a whim), and where something that was obligatory on pain of mortal sin for every priest of the Roman rite on Tuesday, can be forbidden on pain of mortal sin for every priest of the Roman rite on Wednesday, simply because the current occupant of the see of Peter decrees it. Crichton's papal positivism served his needs pretty well in 1969, and perhaps it helps Archbishop Roche to advance an agenda in 2022; but can we imagine a Church in which the maxim is something more like this: What 1500 years of continuous tradition could do, the reigning Pope *can't* undo?

Finally, should Catholics even be using legal terms like “abrogate” in the context of the Church’s life of prayer? Isn’t it a category error? And do we (I include Pius XII, Benedict XVI and Francis within this capacious pronoun!) not muddy the waters still further by bandying around the term *lex orandi* as if this referred to some subsection of the code of canon law? The root of the term is Prosper of Aquitaine’s *lex supplicandi*: the ‘law’ of prayer, in the sense of ‘that which can be observed to be universally practised’. It’s a law akin to the second law of thermodynamics, rather than to the Seamen’s and Soldiers’ False Characters Act 1906. In its proper sense then, Benedict was making a reasonable point in referring to multiple expressions of the *lex orandi* – where more than one legitimate tradition of prayer exists, any one of them can be referred to as a touchstone of Catholic belief. Francis’ use of the term in *Traditionis custodes* seems to have been put in purely as a gratuitous contradiction of Benedict, without any obvious relation to the historical use of the term and without (as far as I can see) any clear meaning at all.

Ben Whitworth

In the current state of extreme flux and open disunity in the liturgical debate, we need to bear in mind that the entire *sitz im leben* of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* was to make the shape and different elements of the liturgy clearer, and to enable the *Plebs sancta Dei* to enter into it more fully according to their baptismal dignity. It was not to alter *a fundamentis* the entire character of the liturgy.

This said, I think we need to reflect that the intention to celebrate in as much demonstrable continuity with the shape and reverential ethos of the liturgy as generally celebrated in the past in many forms (there were many different 'old rites') but fundamentally sharing many important principles, such as the use of Latin, of chant, of reverence and awe, of distinctive ritual postures and actions, and of sacral vesture for those most closely involved in the *actio*, is not best

described as 'copying the style of the old rite'. Of course, in the situation now prevailing, where the ethos of Mass in most places is far removed from that of the *Usus Antiquior*, then any attempt to incorporate the principle of continuity may seem on the surface to be merely apeing the old liturgy. I remember Fr Michael Cullinan, himself a great lover of the *Vetus Ordo*, complaining after one of our ALL Masses back in the 90's that it seemed to be too much an approximation to the Old Rite, as though it were simply *faute de mieux*, i.e. in the (then) absence of opportunities to celebrate the Old Mass freely.

As we have often said in recent times, especially since *Summorum Pontificum*, the purpose of our existence has never been solely to retain Latin where possible, in a time when the Old Rite was relatively unavailable, but, while recognising the intrinsic value of the reforms, readily agreeing that those reforms were neither as well formulated as they should have been, nor as well implemented as they might. We are traditionalists in the proper sense, as we value and treasure the New Rite quite as much as the old, by recognising the points where the Old Rite had lost something or distorted it and the New has attempted to restore what was lost.

Now, when this comes to certain practical details like the use of *ad orientem*, again we need to bear in mind that when the term is often used metonymously to describe 'all facing the same way together', this is not to be dismissed. Facing the same way at Mass is not suddenly pointless if we are not facing East, though I grant that the origin is in facing towards the direction of the rising of the sun for eschatologically symbolic reasons. So it is something that we should be happy to retain when we can, but need not make it into a shibboleth, especially where there is no familiarity with it. I am quite in favour of avoiding 'cognitive overload' on people who are new to the way we celebrate the liturgy. Coping with any Latin at all is pretty revolutionary for too many Catholics nowadays, through no fault of their own.

Adding *ad orientem* to that, straight away, may be a step too far all at once.

When it comes to concelebration, it is part of the Church's rites. It always was. Priests at their ordination always concelebrated with the bishop in the Old Rite. Similarly, Bishops at their ordination concelebrated with the consecrators. What the Council asked for was that a new rite allowing for concelebration be drawn up for use on other occasions as well. This is particularly appropriate when priests concelebrate with their bishop, as at the Chrism Mass and at priestly ordinations. It is permissible on other occasions too, but not mandatory. But if we have concelebration, the aim should be to try to prevent the rather shambolic mess that most concelebrations become, generally because almost nobody knows what to do. All this should also be understood in the light of one of those stipulations of *Traditionis Custodes* with which I agree: that all priests who celebrate the *Vetus Ordo* should not only accept the validity of the principle of concelebration, but should be prepared to practise it, at the very least with the Bishop at the Chrism Mass.

Finally, a word about the role of the deacon: we should try to have a deacon at Mass for the important principle that all ministries should be properly exercised in the liturgy for the fullness of the ritual and the demonstration of the rites *circumdata varietate* (Psalm 44). This does not mean that we should accept in this role only those who are simply in deacon's orders. There is no reason for excluding priests from this role, since, as I pointed out in an essay in *A Voice for All Time*, a priest remains a deacon even after his priestly ordination. and is therefore doing nothing wrong or inappropriate by ministering as a deacon at Mass.

Fr Guy Nicholls Cong. Orat.

I write in connection with Kieran Flanagan's review of R J Urquart's *Ceremonies of the Sarum Missal: A Careful Conjecture*. In *God's Architect: Pugin & the Building of Romantic Britain* by Rosemary Hill (Allen Lane, 2007) there are references to Sarum Rite Masses being celebrated by Cardinal Wiseman and others; but the ultramontane party predominated, and becoming more Roman than Rome was their aim. Some mid-late 19th Century Anglo-Catholics also attempted to revive Sarum Rites within the Church of England, using them to clothe the *Book of Common Prayer* rites, but ultramontane views prevailed again (for fuller details regarding both Catholics and Anglicans here, see Chapters 24, 29 and 30 of *Fashions in Church Furnishings, 1840-1940*, by P. F. Anson, Faith Press 1960, London House & Maxwell 1966). During the mid-twentieth century Father Clement Lloyd Russell, parish priest of St George's Sudbury, Middlesex, in the Archdiocese of Westminster, attempted to give the Roman Rite a Sarum ethos:

<https://www.liturgicalartsjournal.com/2018/04/st-georges-sudbury-and-fr-clement-lloyd.html>

(For an account of Father Russell's political views see *Action Replay* by Jeffrey Hamm, Black House, 2017. Hamm was a long-standing supporter of Sir Oswald Mosley.) Regarding the terms 'Evensong' and 'vestry', the 1966 edition of the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* states that 'Evensong' was the pre-Reformation English word for Vespers, now more familiar in its Anglican usage for the office of Evening Prayer (a conflation of Vespers and Compline) in the Church of England's *Book of Common Prayer*. 'Vestry' it defines it as the place 'in which the vestments, vessels and other requisites for Divine worship are kept and in which the clergy vest'. Anglo-Catholics usually follow the Catholic terminology and use sacristy instead – certainly for the room where the clergy vest – but will sometimes refer to the servers' vestry for where the servers keep their cassocks, etc.

NC

Bryan Little's *Catholic Churches Since 1623* revisited

Those who have orderly libraries at home will know the sense of despair when you go to your shelves for a particular volume and – it's not there; it hasn't been misfiled nearby, it's not in use on a desk or table, it is not lurking anywhere else that you might do your reading, nor has it been loaned out (my mother took to her grave the whereabouts of my copy of Evelyn Waugh's *Edmund Campion* in the elegant 1961 Longman's edition, but I did recover her *Confessions of an Uncommon Attorney* by J R Hine, with its affectionate portraits of Cardinal Gasquet and Adrian Fortescue).

So it was with my copy of *Catholic Churches Since 1623* by Bryan Little. My original copy cost me the princely sum of ten pence (which the previous year had been two shillings), remaindered in a local branch of Boots in 1972, and it was invaluable, containing much information unavailable elsewhere about the architects of, particularly, nineteenth-century suburban Catholic churches that Sir Nikolaus Pevsner felt were unworthy of inclusion in his volumes of *The Buildings of England*. Thankfully I now have another copy, thanks to a friend who directed me to AbeBooks, and it has been a pleasure to return not only to the information contained therein but also to the delightful style of its author.

Few non-fiction works can be read straight through; one tends to use the index to track down what one needs, though of course one of the delights of research is that one is sometimes (often) side-tracked. However *Catholic Churches Since 1623* is most certainly readable; Bryan Little was a lecturer at the University of Bristol and his style is most certainly, in the best sense, conversational: 'Herbert Vaughan, not Bentley, is the man we must thank (or blame, if we dislike his cathedral) for the stylistic choice at Westminster'; and writing of the thwarted decorative scheme for the domes of that cathedral, 'yet one should aim, in essentials, at the fulfilment of Bentley's scheme, for which he

contrived his brickwork as he did.’ And he cannot help being partisan about his own area, talking of Bishop Baines at Prior Park: ‘Baines never received his red hat, but returned to Bath to inject a further dosage of *Romanità* into that beautiful Palladian city . . . I have often heard visitors surprised to hear that [the noble stairway at Prior Park] is not part of Wood the Elder’s design.’

We are revisiting a book published in 1966, when the first liturgical changes were beginning to take place. At the end of the book in a chapter entitled ‘Chiese Aggiornate?’ Little talks initially of post-war developments at places like St George’s Cathedral, Southwark, which were intended to replace as far as possible what was there before the Blitz, with no notion that the “staging” of Catholic worship would be expected to change; at the same time Edward Pugin’s cathedral at Northampton became more “cathedralesque”. Yet Little appears to show his true colours here: ‘In one other cathedral drastic and enlightening re-decoration has also brought with it some important re-ordering. In Pugin’s cruciform building at Nottingham the High Altar is beneath the central tower, so that those who use the transepts now look inwards towards the sanctuary . . . the site of the old High Altar has become that of the bishop’s throne, a modern canopied structure having ousted a throne of Victorian gothic design. But at Plymouth the badly needed redecoration of another cruciform cathedral has been done without drastic refurnishing or liturgical adventure. The building is, however, vastly improved when one recalls the dinginess which once pervaded it.’

It is interesting to see these two cathedrals in the same paragraph, as their two bishops have a connection. Edward Ellis (in post from 1944 to 1974) was the most rigorous bishop in the country when enforcing clerical obedience to *Humanae Vitae* and also one of the most insistent regarding liturgical re-ordering, despite saying to the his Chapter when the *Novus Ordo* first appeared, according to a canon of my acquaintance, “You’re not going to like it.” Yet in his

cathedral (Nottingham) the rood screen finally went, the throne appeared in the centre of the sanctuary, its backing being described as 'the coffin-lid' and so far from the congregation as to be unusable, with altar rails on three sides round the new sanctuary (their gates were later chained back and padlocked to prevent kneeling for Communion).

However at Plymouth Cyril Restieaux (in post from 1955 to 1986), who had been Administrator of Nottingham Cathedral under Bishop Ellis, clearly took a more restrained view, although after his time, when Catholic churches that had 'escaped' the most drastic liturgical reforms suddenly came in for a second round of re-ordering, Plymouth Cathedral was mentioned in the "Nooks and Corners" column of *Private Eye* because of what was proposed. At just the same time Nottingham Cathedral came in for re-assessment: the grey nave and mulberry choir and eastern chapels praised by Little were repainted and a little of the original decoration retrieved. Thirty years later, some more decoration has recently been unearthed, and the Dean is very interested in what might be achieved.

The illustrations in *Catholic Churches Since 1623* are in several cases period pieces: statues veiled for Passiontide at St Walburge's Preston, traditionally-robed nuns at their devotions in St Augustine's Abbotskerswell (now flats, although according to the Devonshire *Pevsner* of 1989 the chapel survives as a communal area, complete with its towering altarpiece and exposition throne); the Franciscan church at Gorton, towering above terraced houses, and since then abandoned as a church and wrecked by vandals, until local people fought against its demolition and got it restored as a community resource.

The picture of Downside leads us to perhaps the saddest part of this book: Bryan Little talks of its rich history: and indeed the Abbey should be celebrating the beginnings of its third centenary, instead of which the community is 'camping out'

at Buckfast. Downside Abbey church still in use as the school chapel, but what will happen to that vast site? “Is this a monastery you’re building or a town?” asked the Victorian bishop who was laying the widely spread-out foundation stones of church, monastery and school. The picture in *Catholic Churches Since 1623* shows the sanctuary at Downside before its re-ordering. A colleague of mine, knowing of my interest in churches, told me about his holiday job in the summer of 1968 shovelling several tons of rubble into an abbey near Bath (Downside, indeed) to create the new sanctuary, which greatly hampered the architectural setting of the choir stalls which had to be relocated further east, moving the monks singing the Divine Office far away from the organ console, so that Dom Gregory Murray was reduced to accompanying them on a one-manual electronic instrument at the far end of the choir.

In a chapter where he shows how energetically the Benedictines have been making ambitious plans, Bryan Little speaks of the projected library at Downside, saying that it ‘corresponds to the polygonal chapter houses of such mediaeval monasteries as Westminster and Abbeydore. I saw this building under construction in 1972 when I was interviewed for a teaching post at Downside, a pleasant afternoon with Dom Aelred Watkin in his pipe-filled study. I’m afraid I couldn’t greatly enthuse about the library, any more than I can enthuse about the Blessed Sacrament chapel at Buckfast, despite it being described by Little as ‘the part of the church most worth seeing by the thousands who throng the abbey’; like a lot of things, good in itself but not in the context in which it has been placed.

Having said that, what I do find wonderful in a much more recent Benedictine work is the nave at Douai Abbey by Michael Blee, a continuation of the unfinished but highly-regarded work there by J Arnold Crush of Wolverhampton, whose name gave much amusement to Mgr Alfred Gilbey; Fisher House chaplaincy had been designed by Crush (its baldacchino was enthusiastically demolished under his

successor in the interests of liturgical simplicity). Bryan Little's interest at Douai is in the monastic block by Frederick Gibberd. This made the national press, astonishment being expressed that the cells would have running water, electric shaver points and central heating. "Monks don't live in a menagerie, you know" commented one of the community.

Little is equally interested in the new plans for Prinknash, built on the foundations of the astonishing church that H S Goodhart-Rendel had designed, 'a little longer than Gloucester Cathedral' as a footnote tells us. Half a century later that building has been abandoned and the community has returned to the nearby Old Abbey, to which they migrated from Caldey in 1928.

The completion of Giles Gilbert Scott's church at Ampleforth is noted, but Little has more to say about the plans for Worth Abbey. After noting that 'no specifically religious impression is planned' for the new living quarters, he turns his attention to the proposed church 'whose interior planning (allowing for the uncertainties of current liturgical moves) is to be "central", and whose ordering may not be unlike that of Ampleforth's daughter priory at St Louis, Missouri. Its silhouette will resemble that of certain types of sun hat, or some people's conception of a flying saucer.' And in a lovely coda so typical of his written style: 'Planning approval has now been given for what promises to be a monastic church of some novelty and excitement, and the hurdles of official consent have proved easier to surmount in the forest ridges of northern Sussex than they were on the wooded slopes of the Gloucestershire Cotswolds.' The church was indeed built as planned; I once kept Good Friday there.

Mention of the priory at St Louis reminds me that on YouTube there is part of a Tridentine High Mass from that very church, two English Benedictines as sacred ministers moving elegantly about the sanctuary and chanting mellifluously the Epistle and Gospel; the celebrant however

is an American Jesuit, who seems to have a completely different liturgical agenda.

Catholic Churches Since 1623 ends with the then still incomplete Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral. Edwin Lutyens's splendid design, commissioned by my distant kinsman Archbishop Downey, got as far as the crypt and was replaced by a simplified design from Adrian Gilbert Scott, whose brother Giles was at work on the Anglican Cathedral down the road. With the arrival of John Carmel Heenan (a man in a hurry if ever there was one) as archbishop of Liverpool it became clear that such classical dreams could never be realised, and he launched a competition for 'what was hoped would be a truly modern cathedral, up to date in its style and enshrining recent liturgical thinking' (Vatican II had recently begun). Of the almost three hundred designs submitted, 'gothic traditionalism, neo-brutalism, reminiscences of the opera house at Sydney, and sheer fancy were found among those rejected.' Frederick Gibberd won, his liturgical planning bearing a resemblance to that of the new church built by the Benedictines not far away in Leyland.

Little makes some interesting comparisons in describing Gibberd's design. An obvious one was with Oscar Niemeyer's cathedral in Brasilia, which he finds 'far more graceful'. But his characteristic prose allows him to conclude: 'a sad contrast between [Niemeyer's structure] and the cathedral being finished on the slopes above central Liverpool may arise from the Brasilia project's being so caught up in the vagaries of Brazilian politics that the new cathedral amid the tropical jungles may never be completed.' But having used Brasilia as a stick with which to beat Liverpool, he then goes on to call the new Merseyside building 'carpentry in concrete' and to make favourable comparisons with the octagon at Ely.

In a later book, *English Cathedrals in Colour* of 1972, Little speaks of 'Sir Frederick Gibberd's great concrete-strutted pavilion', and observes that 'The designers took account of

ideas accepted in the first phase of the liturgical revolution', but that at Liverpool so large an auditorium comes more into its own on special and diocesan occasions than for the Sunday by Sunday worship of its parishioners and chance visitors. He makes a prescient observation at the end of this chapter on Other Cathedrals:

'In an age where Christianity works in a social setting more akin to minority or persecution times than to those of the theocentric Middle Ages, it will thus become closer to the notion whereby a bishop's church is also the normal worshipping place of a good proportion of his flock.' 'It' is the new Cathedral at Clifton in Little's home city of Bristol, nearly finished at the time he published *English Cathedrals in Colour* and considerably more than a gleam in Bishop Rudderham's eye when *Catholic Churches Since 1623* was completed: finance was in place and outline planning permission had been granted. Earlier in the book Little entertainingly detailed the disasters befalling the old Clifton Cathedral, and the desperate measures adopted by the formidable [Arch]bishop Ullathorne, not to mention the dinginess and clutter that pervaded the building in later years, but there is no stopping his enthusiasm for the newcomer in the city he loves:

'[The planning approval covered] the upward impact on the skyline of an area of Bristol where sensitivity and restraint are important, and where any new church must both sympathise with the dignified period architecture of Clifton Park and must also without question, be a creation of its own age.' (Words that make me wince when in my capacity as Vice Chair of Nottingham Civic Society I see them, or their equivalent, on planning applications.)

Little concludes his book by saying: 'Whatever may be the exact external appearance of this new cathedral in Clifton Park one can say that this new headquarters of the Clifton diocese has its chance of being more up to date, for its particular purpose, than other buildings in Europe . . . it can

hardly fail, in the entire setting of modern Catholicism, to be truly historic.’

So what went wrong? I make no comment about language or rite here, but when decisions were delegated to the ‘competent regional authority’ it certainly would not be a case of *Roma locuta est, causa finita est*. Instead we were told about accepting ‘the Mind of the Church’, whatever that was. Who knew? In David Lodge’s novel *The British Museum is Falling Down*, published in 1965 but evidently set slightly earlier, the protagonist Adam Appleby is prevailed upon to give his local curate a lift to Westminster Cathedral for a conference. Asked what it was about he replied: “Oh, it’s some Monsignor or other who’s giving a lecture on the Council to the priests of the diocese. One priest was invited from each parish, so we tossed up for it, and I lost.”

So the priest (Fr Finbar Flannegan in this case) would feed back to his colleagues what he remembered, and the resulting confusion would be the Mind of the Church, with everybody completely at sea, some bishops determined to exercise authority in an ecclesiastical world of constant change (the more traditional the bishop, the more iconoclastic they became in their churches, it would seem) and the only certainty seeming to be the false syllogism “Something must be done; this is something; therefore we must do it.”

During my involvement with the Art and Architecture department of my local diocesan liturgical commission, I visited a church where a permanent re-ordering was proposed and where the only change (in a fairly long and narrow sanctuary) had been the installation of a portable free-standing altar. We removed this, revealing the old high altar unobstructed behind it. I commented on how restful the sanctuary appeared without it, and to my surprise the two priests and the architect who were with me agreed. If only the *status quo ante* was still an option!

Ian Wells

Two views of Holy Week in 19th century Rome:

Charles Michael Baggs and Nicholas Wiseman

(1)

*The Ceremonies of Holy-Week at the Vatican
and S. John Lateran, described by C M Baggs DD
Cambriere d'honneur to His Holiness
Rome 1839*

*Four Lectures on the Offices and Ceremonies of Holy Week
as performed in the papal chapels,
delivered in Rome in the Lent of MDCCCXXXVII
London 1839*

These two works, though they appeared in the same year and are on the same subject, are very different. The two authors have one thing in common, though: they both served as Rector of the English College in Rome, Baggs succeeding Wiseman in 1840, when the latter was consecrated titular Bishop of Melipotamus *in partibus infidelium*. A man of extraordinary ability, he had been appointed to the office of Rector at the remarkably early age of 25, and on the re-establishment of the Catholic hierarchy in 1850 became the first Archbishop of Westminster.

Baggs' was the second course of lectures on Holy Week given before Cardinal Weld in his apartments in the Vatican, and Wiseman's was the third (the first had been given by an American, Dr John England, the first Bishop of Charleston). Wiseman states that Baggs' text is 'preparing for the Press in this city' (i.e. Rome), and he is keen to show that a third series of lectures (his) is not superfluous, which he does by stating that whereas England and Baggs just describe and explain the ceremonies, *he* 'has rather endeavoured to give their spirit' and has 'suggested principles which may assist

strangers in attending them with profit'. If that does not give him a prior claim, Wiseman does have one advantage, in that his book is furnished with engravings showing the various ceremonies in progress, and the book is prefaced by a detailed plan of the papal chapels, galleries and staircases where the services take place. This is helpful to the reader, for example when he explains that the Palm Sunday procession takes place round the Sala Regia.

In this first essay I shall try to convey something of the flavour of Wiseman's approach to the subject. [I have left his punctuation, which differs from today's - particularly in the far more frequent use of commas - unaltered.] This is what he says about the office of Tenebrae: 'A certain number of candles, placed on a triangular stand, are by degrees extinguished; one, that is, after each psalm, until a mystical darkness (it being still day) is produced. These offices begin each day about four of the clock in the afternoon, or rather sooner; and are in the Pope's chapel, chiefly remarkable for two things. The first is, part of the Lamentations of Jeremiah...three portions of that feeling elegy are given to each day; the first being arranged in such exquisite harmony as ravishes the sense; the two latter sung by one voice in an inflexion of ancient and most moving melody. The second thing to be specially noted is the well-known music of the *Miserere*, which closes the service, leaving on the soul a solemn impression of harmonious feeling which no words I have would describe.'

On the washing of feet: 'This in other places is performed upon poor men, but at Rome, by the Pope, upon thirteen priests, generally poor, of different nations, who are afterwards served by him at table, in a hall upstairs. For conveniently seeing all these functions, tickets are necessary, which may be easily obtained'. He adds in a footnote: 'These tickets (for ladies) are issued by Monsignor the Pope's

Maggiordomo, at his office in the Vatican Palace. Application should be made for them through the resident of each country, or through some person known to him, who thus vouches for the respectability of the applicant.' [One assumes that the 'for ladies' implies that anyone obviously a gentleman would be admitted automatically, but I cannot be sure of this.]

Wiseman's observations on the Good Friday Liturgy, the 'Mass of the Presanctified', are notable: 'The service throughout is lugubrious and sad; the throne and altar are stripped of all ornament, the floor and seats in the chapel are bare, the sacerdotal vestments black. After some moments of silent prostration, the priest proceeds to a broken and almost disordered service...' And from the account of Holy Saturday: 'The attention of strangers is generally drawn off from the Vatican to the Lateran Basilica, where a long and complicated function takes place; to wit, in addition to the proper service performed in every church, the conferring of orders of every degree, from the tonsure to the priesthood...and the baptism and confirmation of any converted Jews or Mahomedans [sic] who may be ready for these sacraments.'

All the above extracts are from the opening section of Wiseman's first lecture, and it will be remembered that he claimed he was going to do more than just give descriptions, as Dr England and Bishop Baggs had done. He says he wishes to 'prepare the mind for setting a due value on these holy functions, and properly receiving their impressions', and he is appropriately critical of people whom we might today call liturgical tourists, 'those who, in the language of the day 'lay themselves out' for seeing everything, as though it were a show (for some have even been known to go to the indecent extent of taking refreshment with them into the chapel)'

He proceeds: 'I will not so much treat of the functions of Holy Week as they are performed all over the Catholic world, and even in most churches of this city, but I will ever keep in view that performance of them which you will principally be attracted to witness, in the presence of the Sovereign pontiff'(who at that time was Gregory XVI). He goes on to say that he will divide the offices and ceremonies of Holy Week in their connection with art, with history and antiquity and finally 'in their religious light, considering them as intended to excite virtuous and devout expressions.'

There is a great deal about the 'art' (which he seems to rank first in importance, though today we probably wouldn't, unless we were merely secular or academic observers). Wiseman wields the pen of a Catholic connoisseur, if I may put it that way: he writes with knowledge and understanding not only of the art and architecture but of their application to, and relationship with, Catholic faith and practice. This is certainly appealing for the Catholic reader today, used as one is, when going round art galleries and churches, to overhearing the wholly secular reactions of those who, however much they might know about brush-strokes and pigment, capital and architrave, have little idea of the meaning and purpose of what they are looking at. Not that in the 21st century we in the Church can afford to be complacent for, as Wiseman says, 'I will premise that the church architecture of every age should be a monument of its religious condition, and a memorial of its spirit' – a sobering thought when we look at some nominally 'Catholic' churches today.

I won't take up much space here with Wiseman's descriptions of the artistic and architectural background to the ceremonies, partly because they are, curiously, the most dated sections of the work. Naturally there is a detailed description of the Sixtine (sic) Chapel and much information

about Michelangelo's huge paintings ('this overpowering work'). The curious thing about all this is that Cardinal Weld, to whom these lectures were delivered, already knew all about it, as did his household who no doubt attended with him. But Wiseman would naturally have had an eye on publication in England (the book was printed by Charles Dolman of New Bond Street) where, for most of his readers, seeing these descriptions would be the closest they would ever get to experiencing Holy Week in the Vatican, since at that time there were still comparatively few who could afford or manage the long journey to Rome and its concomitant expense.

His readers got good value, though, because what Wiseman is adept at is conveying the atmosphere, and the sensation of being there: 'the great and glorious sight...that variegated multitude of citizens, peasants, pilgrims and foreigners, and that glittering array of equipages and troops, which fill the basin of [St Peter's] magnificent court; and the emotion which the benediction of the Father of Christendom sends, as if by electric communion, through the dense assembly.' He is also good at giving us colourful details, such as this, on Good Friday: 'the purple colour worn on the Sunday is changed into the deeper mourning hue of black; the Cardinals, for this only day in the year, have their robes of serge instead of silk; the Liturgy itself seems to be confused and is imperfect; and then the church is left without her incense and taper, mourning and solitary, as on the loss of an only-begotten.'

There is quite a lot about music too; we know that the early to mid 19th century was not the most glorious time for either the chant or polyphony, and it is curious to read this about Palestrina's *Missa Papae Marcelli*: 'Whoever wishes to hear this magnificent composition must attend the Pope's chapel on Holy Saturday, the only day in the year it is performed...

The character of Palestrina's music is rich, harmonious and imposing. It is essentially choral, as all church music should be.' But he then immediately adds, without any apparent connection: 'A plain litany, sung by the untaught multitude, with all the earnestness of devotion, will affect the soul more powerfully than all the artificial divisions of a modern performer'. And of course, we must remember that, to us, the singing would have sounded far more reminiscent of the opera house (from where no doubt many of the singers came) than of, say, Westminster Cathedral today.

The third lecture, 'The Ceremonies of Holy Week considered in connexion with History' has near its beginning these bold and instructive lines: 'On hearing that I am about to treat of the historic value of these offices and ceremonies, perhaps many will be inclined to prejudge that I am anxious to prove them all most ancient, and trace them back to the earliest times of Christianity. Whoever shall so imagine will be completely mistaken. If the Catholic Church, in all things essential of faith and worship, lays claim to apostolic antiquity, she no less holds a right to continuity of descent; and this, as well as the other, must be by monuments attested.' In other words, antiquity isn't everything, and the early Church isn't the only Church!

And here he is drawing attention, as he likes to do, to something out of the ordinary: 'This year, being the seventh of the pontificate of the present Pope, you will have the opportunity of witnessing another very ancient rite, only performed every seventh year of each reign. This is the blessing of the *Agnus Dei*, waxen cakes stamped with the figure of a lamb...The origin of this rite seems to have been the very ancient custom of breaking up the paschal candle of the preceding year, and distributing the fragments among the faithful.' There's also a brief word about Latin: 'As the Church has chosen to preserve the Latin language rather

than adopt the later tongues that have sprung up, so has she in this kept her words as she first found them, and not altered them when men have given them new meanings.'

I was surprised to read that at this time the practice of the stripping of the altars on Maundy Thursday had generally died out, 'now hardly observed except in St Peter's'. He describes also how after Tenebrae on that day wine and water are poured on the altar and the canons rub it all over with brushes, 'after which it is washed with sponges and dried'. And speaking as a priest of the English Church, he adds there that the same rite of washing the altars is prescribed also in the Sarum Missal, from which he quotes the relevant rubric at length.

The final lecture is entitled 'Religious View of these Functions', and we are perhaps surprised to find it placed last. In fact, quite a lot of it is also historical as well as theological, but what appears dramatically is a poetic strain, which gives us quite a new view of our author. So rather than pick over the liturgical and devotional minutiae, of which there are a great many, let us leave Wiseman with this passage from his exordium:

'When our blessed Saviour expired, it would seem as though divine power were exerted to bring into harmony with the moment the appearances of nature. The sky was darkened, and the earth trembled, and rocks were rent, and sepulchres opened, that whatever was seen or heard might sympathise with the main action of the awful tragedy. It would have been painfully unnatural, and discordant, had the catastrophe taken place, wherein nature's Author suffered, amidst the liquid splendours of a spring day's noon, while flowers were opening at the foot, and birds chirping their connubial songs round the head, of his Cross. And it is in a similar spirit that the Church, his spouse, observes annually the representation of this heart-rending sight, seeking to attune

the accessories and circumstances thereof to the melancholy and solemn depth of sentiment which it must inevitably infuse. Therefore are these days of fasting and humiliation; for who would feast and riot when his Lord is refreshed only with vinegar and gall?’

In our next edition we shall turn to Bishop Baggs, and see how he went about depicting for his readers the experience of the Roman Holy Week.

Christopher Francis

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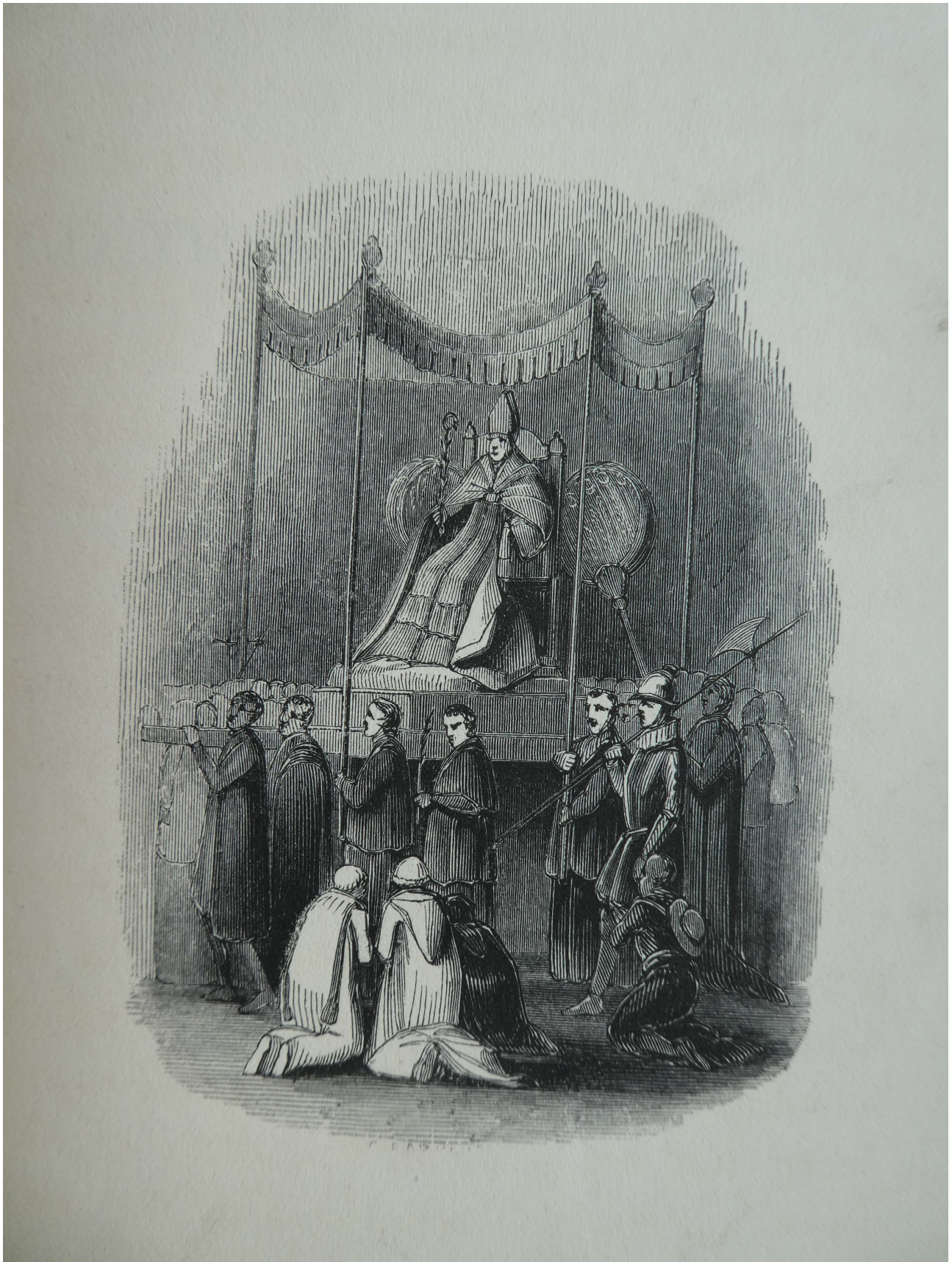
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Vignette from *The Offices and Ceremonies of Holy Week*, 1839
(see p. 24)