



## **Vincentian Liturgical Leadership: The role of the *Manuel des cérémonies romaines***

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### **Abstract:**

Vincent de Paul emphasized the correct celebration of liturgy, as evidenced by his early writings and initiatives. His concern was addressing the varied and often incorrect liturgical practices he observed. To promote uniformity within the Congregation of the Mission, Vincent and his followers developed the *Manual of Roman Ceremonies* (1662), led by René Alméras. This manual aimed to standardize liturgical practices among seminarians and priests by adhering closely to the Roman Rite. Despite initial resistance and adaptations to local customs, the manual influenced subsequent Vincentian liturgical practices. Later superiors and prominent Vincentians, such as M. Etienne and Giuseppe Baldeschi, continued to advocate for liturgical precision and uniformity. Their efforts culminated in the formation of the *Ephemerides Liturgicae*, a significant liturgical publication. Vincentian contributions to liturgy persisted through ongoing teaching and publication efforts, influencing both local and wider church practices up to and including the reforms of the Second Vatican Council.

Vicente de Paúl hizo hincapié en la correcta celebración de la liturgia, como demuestran sus primeros escritos e iniciativas. Su preocupación era hacer frente a las variadas y a menudo incorrectas prácticas litúrgicas que observaba. Para promover la uniformidad dentro de la Congregación de la Misión, Vicente y sus seguidores elaboraron el Manual de Ceremonias Romanas (1662), dirigido por René Alméras. Este manual pretendía estandarizar las prácticas litúrgicas entre seminaristas y sacerdotes adhiriéndose estrechamente al Rito Romano. A pesar de la resistencia inicial y de las adaptaciones a las costumbres locales, el manual influyó en las prácticas litúrgicas vicencianas posteriores. Superiores posteriores y vicencianos destacados, como M. Etienne y Giuseppe Baldeschi, siguieron abogando por la precisión y la uniformidad litúrgicas. Sus esfuerzos culminaron en la formación de las *Ephemerides Liturgicae*, una importante publicación litúrgica. Las contribuciones vicencianas a la liturgia persistieron a través de la enseñanza y la publicación, influyendo en las prácticas eclesiológicas locales y más amplias hasta las reformas del Concilio Vaticano II.

Vincent de Paul a mis l'accent sur la célébration correcte de la liturgie, comme en témoignent ses premiers écrits et initiatives. Il se préoccupait des pratiques liturgiques variées et souvent incorrectes qu'il observait. Pour promouvoir l'uniformité au sein de la Congrégation de la Mission, Vincent et ses disciples ont élaboré le Manuel des cérémonies romaines (1662), sous la direction de René Alméras. Ce manuel visait à normaliser les pratiques liturgiques parmi les séminaristes et les prêtres en adhérant étroitement au rite romain. Malgré la résistance initiale et les adaptations aux coutumes locales, le manuel a influencé les pratiques liturgiques vincentiennes ultérieures. Des supérieurs ultérieurs et des Vincentiens éminents, tels que M. Etienne et Giuseppe Baldeschi, ont continué à plaider en faveur de la précision et de l'uniformité liturgiques. Leurs efforts ont abouti à la création des *Ephemerides Liturgicae*, une publication liturgique importante. Les contributions vincentiennes à la liturgie ont persisté à travers des efforts continus d'enseignement et de publication, influençant à la fois les pratiques locales et plus larges de l'Eglise jusqu'aux réformes du Concile Vatican II.



**Keywords:** Vincentian Liturgy, *Manual of Roman Ceremonies*, the Congregation of the Mission, Leadership.

## Historical background

Vincent de Paul demonstrated his interest in the correct celebration of the liturgy in several ways. A very early indication of this was the obituary letter dated 1 January 1643 which he wrote to the Congregation at the death of M. Jean Pillé (†1642). “This love [for God] made him very involved concerning those matters dealing with divine service, since he had a very high appreciation of all the orders of the Church. He took a special pleasure in ceremonies, rubrics, plainchant, music, etc. He could sufficiently deplore the ignorance and scandal of priests, and their negligence in keeping the rubrics, in practicing the ceremonies, and in keeping the churches clean.”<sup>1</sup> In many ways, Pillé’s devotion paralleled the founder’s own.

The publication of additional texts directly or indirectly stemming from Vincent de Paul has more than one notable omission.<sup>2</sup> One of these is the *Manual of Roman Ceremonies* (*Manuel des ceremonies romaines*),<sup>3</sup> published first in 1662. M. Vincent initiated and supported this work, and some of his confreres completed it after his death. The head of the publication team was René Alméras (1613–1672), the founder’s immediate successor. He took his cue from M. Vincent’s concern that his confreres follow the Roman Rite, or more correctly, Roman usages, as mentioned in the Common Rules concerning the Divine Office.<sup>4</sup> Alméras described its origin as follows in his circular on the subject of the book:

And this was not only by meetings among ourselves, but also with the externs most capable in this material, by the permission our late Most Honored Father, M. Vincent. While he was still alive, four or five months before his death, and with his same permission and agreement, we began the practice here [making manuscript copies from the best authors].<sup>5</sup>

Once they realized that making manuscript copies was too difficult, they planned to have the work printed for the Congregation.

The issue behind the founder’s concern was that many bishops in France had taken it upon themselves to adapt the Roman Missal of Pius V to local tastes, traditions, and other circumstances. The saint had been deeply and negatively touched by the multiplicity of liturgical practices that he witnessed, or, even more to the point, which he had

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<sup>1</sup> *Recueil des principales circulaires des supérieurs généraux de la Congrégation de la Mission*, vol. 1, Paris, 1877, p. 7. See also Conf. 206, 23 May 1659, p. 211 (on uniformity in the practice of the liturgy).

<sup>2</sup> *Saint Vincent de Paul. Correspondence, Conferences, Documents. Additional Texts. Volumes A, B, C1, C2*, edited, translated by John E. Rybolt, C.M., Chicago, 2020, [dmm.depaul@gmail.com](mailto:dmm.depaul@gmail.com).

<sup>3</sup> *Manuel des ceremonies romaines qui s’observent dans les plus ordinaires offices divins, tiré des livres romains les plus authentiques, & des plus intelligens écrivains en cette matiere, par quelques-uns des prestres de la congregation de L[a] M[ission]* Paris, 1662. The “Derniere Edition” [i.e., Most Recent Edition], Lyons, 1691, called Second Edition at the end of the text addressed to the reader. Many others followed, and the work took its place among the standard works on the subject. See, for example, *The Ceremonies of Low Mass, according to the Rubrics of the Missal, ... new edition*, Dublin, 1846.

<sup>4</sup> [Common Rules] 10:5, in *Constitutions and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission*, Rome, 1984, translation Philadelphia, 1989: “We pray it in the Roman rite and in common,” p. 139.

<sup>5</sup> *Recueil*, vol. 1, p. 52, circular 12, 22 April 1662.

experienced in his own priestly life.<sup>6</sup> His confreres were responsible for forming and teaching seminarians and priests in the correct way to celebrate the Church's liturgy, but the varieties that these groups had experienced in their home dioceses precluded any uniformity.

For the sake of uniformity within the Congregation of the Mission, M. Vincent made sure that the various sets of rules, generically called the Rules of Office, would insist on this, earnestly promoting the study and practice of liturgy by the seminarians and priests.<sup>7</sup>

For those outside the Congregation whom the confreres were to form, the solution to the promotion of uniformity that seemed the most universal and efficient was to teach, and to practice, the exact ceremonial as used in the papal chapels in Rome. Out of all these concerns there eventually arose the *Manual of Roman Ceremonies*, the object of this study. Its purposes, among others, included helping the young clergy understand what was expected of them liturgically, and to promote uniformity amid the apparent chaos of liturgical practices. One reason for this was that the rubrics of the Pius V missal were often obscure, leaving many details either unexamined or poorly explained. It was precisely here that Almérás and his confreres were to devote their energies.

Besides this volume, published in 1662, Almérás also issued several circulars mentioning liturgical observances,<sup>8</sup> and a second, revised, edition of the *Manual* in 1670. He concluded the circular that presented the second edition with the following:

I thus beg you, Monsieur, and all the other priests in your house, to read this *Manual* attentively, and to renew yourselves by this means in the practice and exact observance of the holy ceremonies which are faithfully described there, without making a single change, so that we might preserve among ourselves, as members of the same body, a complete uniformity in this exercise of the virtue of religion, and that, by following the obligation of our state, we might give in this way to all the other priests, the example of zeal for the honor of God that they expect from us.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the injunctions to follow faithfully all the details of the ceremonies, it is known that some houses, particularly in Rome, found conflicts between Almérás's work and the realities of liturgical observances in the Eternal City. They decided not to change their practice to that of France at least temporarily.<sup>10</sup> In Paris, too, the confreres felt obliged to follow certain of the practices of the diocese, rather than those in Rome.

Subsequent superiors general also followed the same path. The general assemblies of 1692 and 1711 asked whether it was not time to (re)print the second volume of ceremonies, and M. Jolly (1622–1697), the superior general, and M. Bonnet (1664–1735), his successor, both replied that it was being revised and corrected.<sup>11</sup> In fact, it was not reissued until 1717. M. Jacquier (1706–1787), the last superior general to die before the French Revolution, chose his New Year's circular of 1772 to remind his confreres how devoted their holy founder was to the proper celebration of the Church's liturgy:

Since God had chosen him to be the restorer and promoter of his worship, of his

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<sup>6</sup> See the author's "How Vincent de Paul Celebrated Mass," (awaiting publication).

<sup>7</sup> CCD, vol. 11, conf. 6, 14, 75, 119, 120, 141; vol. 12, conf. 181, 206 (uniformity), and others.

<sup>8</sup> *Recueil*, vol. 1, pp. 40–46, circulars 7 (1662), 8 (undated),

<sup>9</sup> *Recueil*, vol. 1, p. 111, circular 35, 1 April 1670.

<sup>10</sup> "Ricordi per le nostre funtioni. Registrati nell' Anno 1678," ms., 170 pp, in archives of the superior of the house of Naples, sect. 59, "Nota circa la mutatione di alcune ceremonie."

<sup>11</sup> *Recueil*, vol. 1, pp. 192 (Jolly, circular 29, 1692), and p. 258 (Bonnet, circular 3, 1711).

glory, honor and service, He also called him to be a zealous promoter of piety and to teach even more by his examples than by his words, for the country people in the missions, for clerics in the seminaries, . . . full of a singular veneration for all holy things destined to honor him, churches, the Holy Mass, the administration and reception of the sacraments, the divine offices, and the ceremonies of the Church.<sup>12</sup>

The same care for the liturgy of the Church was maintained after the French Revolution. This was particularly evident in the thinking of M. Etienne, the great reformer of the nineteenth century. For him, the proper celebration of the liturgy had two aspects: the edification of the faithful, including other priests, and a personal awareness of the awesome nature of the Church's worship. He wrote in his circular of 21 April 1844, shortly after his election, that he had noted a certain negligence in liturgical celebrations. He continued:

I can hardly refrain from trembling over the dispositions of some confrere who would ascend the holy altar without serious preparation, who would not demonstrate that he was profoundly penetrated with the awesome mysteries that he was performing, and who was not giving great attention to fulfilling the ceremonies of Holy Mass not only correctly but also with that edifying piety and touching dignity that so characterizes a child of Saint Vincent.<sup>13</sup>

In the United States at the same period, the Vincentian bishop of St. Louis, Joseph Rosati (1789–1843), together with the bishop of Boston, the Jesuit Benedict Fenwick (1782–1846), participated in the First Provincial Council of Baltimore, held in 1829. Among the council's decrees was number 31, authorizing a Ceremonial to be written in English,<sup>14</sup> and the council fathers in the second provincial council, 1833, deputed those two bishops to do the task and have their work approved.<sup>15</sup> Their volume, the first in a long series of editions, adaptations, name changes, and revisions, appeared in 1841.<sup>16</sup> For decades it served a purpose similar to the *Manual* drawn up by Alméras and his colleagues, but the *Manual* does not seem to have been the source of the Rosati Fenwick volume. Instead, he translated and adapted the volume by Baldeschi mentioned just below.<sup>17</sup>

Later in the nineteenth century, Italian confreres in Rome took the lead in liturgical studies. Giuseppe Baldeschi (1791–1849), master of papal ceremonies for Leo XII, wrote a work in four volumes on the ceremonies of the Mass. It appeared before 1823.<sup>18</sup> He became involved with the Accademia Liturgica sponsored by the Holy See. Felice Zualdi (1828–1893), who spent his whole priestly life in the Montecitorio house,

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<sup>12</sup> *Recueil*, vol. 2, p. 83 (Jacquier, circular 13, 1772).

<sup>13</sup> *Recueil*, vol. 3, p. 50 (Etienne, circular 5, 1844).

<sup>14</sup> *Bullarium Pontificium Sacrae Congregationis De Propaganda Fide*, vol. 5, Rome, 1841, “[Decretum] Concilii Baltimorensis Provincialis Primi,” in *Concilium I. Provinciale Baltimori Habitum*, Appendix, p. 16.

<sup>15</sup> *Bullarium Pontificium*, “Concilium II Provinciale, Baltimorae Habitum,” Appendix, p. 27.

<sup>16</sup> *Ceremonial, for the use of the Catholic Churches in the United States of America. Published by order of the First Council of Baltimore—with the Approbation of the Holy See. To which is prefixed an Explanation of the Ceremonies.* Baltimore, 1841.

<sup>17</sup> *A Manual of the Ceremonies used in The Catholic Church Faithfully translated by order of the First Council, held in Baltimore in 1829 for the use of the Churches of the United States of America*, Boston, 1833, p. v.

<sup>18</sup> [Edouard Robert.] *Notices bibliographiques sur les écrivains de la Congrégation de la Mission*, Angoulême, 1878, p. 7, lists *Esposizione delle sacre cerimonie*, Rome, 1830, 4 vols. The 1823 version is listed as a second edition. It was often reprinted and republished as “Il nuovo Baldeschi,”

headed this liturgical academy (1867?–1883) located there.<sup>19</sup> Another Vincentian liturgical expert was Luigi Marchesi (1825–1872), Zualdi’s predecessor and a consultor of the Sacred Congregation of Rites.<sup>20</sup> Zualdi’s successor was Caledonio Mancini (1842–1910), the founder in 1887 of *Ephemerides Liturgicae*, the pre-eminent liturgical publication for specialists, a role it continues to exercise. Zualdi’s only publication was the [\*Caeremoniale missae privatae\*](#), translated into English by Malachy O’Callaghan (1825–1913), an Irish confrere. For years, O’Callaghan’s *Sacred Ceremonies of Low Mass* was considered the standard work in English for an orderly presentation of the rites and ceremonies of the Mass. Although Zualdi did not refer to the *Manual*, his volume took its place alongside it, and a third Irish confrere, Joseph S. Sheehy (1865–1948), updated Zualdi into post-Second World War years. Despite its many editions, this influential volume has escaped mention in the standard histories, at least in English, of the rites of the Mass.

Finally, two more well-known Italian confreres took leadership in more recent liturgical studies and the modern reform of the liturgy. Annibale Bugnini (1912–82) had a long career in liturgical studies through teaching, writing and editing (*Annali della Missione, Bollettino Vincenziano, Ephemerides Liturgicae, and Vincentiana*), and this brought him into the liturgical circles of the Holy See. He was secretary of the 1948 papal commission for the reform of the liturgy, and then of the preparatory commission for the Second Vatican Council’s work on the liturgy. With his knowledge and organizational skills, he played a major role in the revised liturgy of the Roman rite.<sup>21</sup> A companion in many of his studies was Carlo Braga (1927–2014), director of *Ephemerides Liturgicae* and an advisor of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, among many other important services for the Holy See and the Congregation of the Mission.

The confreres mentioned above are only a sample of many others who devoted themselves to the promotion of the sacred liturgy up to the present, particularly through their teaching and writing in Vincentian-directed seminaries. In fact, the Sulpicians printed a related work prepared by their founder, Jean-Jacques Olier. His *Explication des ceremonies de la grand’ Messe de Paroisse selon l’usage romaine* (Paris, 1687), reviews the basics of the parochial High Mass, while adding spiritual considerations to each portion of the liturgy. The Vincentian work was more detailed but less spiritual.

### **The Manual**

The reader will find here not a summary of the entire lengthy and complex volume, but rather a guide to some of its salient features. Its importance today has shrunk to nearly nothing, since there are numerous published guides to the celebration of the liturgy both past and present. However, what is important is the care and attention to details that are evident in its pages. This was one of the first and the most widespread of such liturgical manuals, as its continued republications for two centuries, up to the middle of the nineteenth century, demonstrate.<sup>22</sup>

### **Opening letter**

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<sup>19</sup> [Silva, Pompeo,] *Cenni Storici de la Congregazione della Missione in Italia (1642–1925)*, Piacenza, 1925, p. 47.

<sup>20</sup> *Cenni Storici*, p. 149; [Edouard Robert,] *Notices bibliographiques*, pp. 176–181.

<sup>21</sup> On this, see Annibale Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy 1948–1975*, trans. Matthew J. O’Connell (Collegeville, MN, 1990).

<sup>22</sup> [Edouard Robert,] *Notices bibliographiques*, p. 243, listed under Anonymes français. The author lists eight subsequent editions in France alone (p. 244). There were many others.

The volume opens with an open letter addressed to Jesus, “sovereign priest and author of the ceremonies.” The author’s concern is that some priests neglect almost entirely the practice of the ceremonies. Since they are complicated, these rites need to be studied, reviewed, and practiced. Otherwise, they are carried out, Alméras asserts, “with little order and with irreverence.” Even though Jesus does not show his anger, the clergy fear eventual punishment. Therefore, to avoid divine retribution, Alméras and his team of confreres offer the means to celebrate the liturgy well.

## **Preface**

The book’s preface is devoted to some historical and theological background. Alméras believed that in his day God has resurrected in his Church the grace and the spirit of priesthood. This assertion must have been self-evident, particularly on the basis of the decrees of the Council of Trent. These were slowly taking root in France, and the author must certainly have been thinking of the new movements in the Church in the post-conciliar period. One of these, of course, was the founding of the Congregation of the Mission, which was devoted not only to missions among the poor folk of the countryside, but also to the formation of the clergy sent to minister to them.

Much had been written, he continues, about liturgical ceremonies: gathering them up from various official publications, arranging them for ease of understanding, and explaining them. Much in them, he noted, employed obscure Latin or even Greek terms, thereby diminishing their value and impact. This was particularly true since the liturgical books were largely written only in Latin. One of the author’s questions was to ask himself, and the reader, what this new volume might add. One partial answer was that the book was written in French. That could help seminary students and laity, such as sacristans and altar servers, along with others who had a role in the liturgy of the Church.

Another consideration that his editorial team had to consider was that the numerous works held contrary opinions on certain matters. For this reason the desired uniformity in worship was not being furthered. To achieve uniformity, his researchers had to study all the ceremonies in the Roman Missal, the Ceremonial of Bishops, the decisions of the Congregation of Rites, and the Roman Ritual, along with commentaries on them. Alméras continued by noting that his team could not present every possible opinion about liturgical matters nor decide on which were preferable. Instead, his colleagues had recourse to the best possible living scholars, and met with them on the issues. This elicited a great deal of agreement, but they still found it impossible to conform in all ways with the Ceremonial of Bishops. These differences and the reasons behind their choice were spelled out in detail in an unpublished circular letter, also dated 1662, addressed to the members of the Congregation.<sup>23</sup> These are reflected in several places in the manuscript liturgical manual prepared for the Paris mother house.<sup>24</sup>

Continuing his presentation of the work of his editorial team, Alméras mentioned that recourse had also been had to the Holy See, so as to present Roman practice exactly. The evident conclusion, for him, was that the ceremonies being presented in this volume were not new. Rather, they had been studied, analyzed, and compared so as to present the best practices. Another feature that could not be overlooked, but which was the cause of some of the multiplicity of practice, was “praiseworthy customs of different areas,” especially Paris. Since the role of custom is recognized in Church law, any customs with

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<sup>23</sup> “Listes de quelques endroits du cérémonial des Evêques qu’on a résolu de ne pas observer en toute la Compagnie,” in ACMP, Alméras, dossier 37.

<sup>24</sup> “Coutumier de la Congregation de la Mission propre à la maison de S<sup>t</sup> Lazare,” manuscript in Archives of the Mission, Paris, *passim*.

a certain history could be accepted as law. This, of course, begs the question of why the book was drawn up in the first place, but Alméras and his collaborators were looking to tread a fine line between the revised liturgical texts and the laudable customs that had grown up, undoubtedly based on a sense of reverence, the power of biblical models, and longstanding local custom. Still, the author acknowledged that not everyone would agree with the details presented in the volume. His hope was that those who hewed to close observance of those details would find support there.<sup>25</sup>

The details of various printings of the *Manual* are obscure. The first printing, dated 1662, bore the approval of the doctors of the Sorbonne dated the same year, and the royal license for publishing another edition was dated 1669. A previously announced second edition was completed and appeared in Lyons in 1691. This edition noted that it had long been requested by many priests. The main differences dealt with the general maxims which had been presented in the first edition but which were explained throughout the work, and thus were unnecessary. Another, and certainly welcome change, was a separate explanation of the duties of each minister. Finally, special ceremonies for certain annual solemn occasions were included for the sake of completeness.

## Contents

The *Manual of Roman Ceremonies* was divided into four parts (Low Mass, Solemn Mass, Divine office, other ceremonies); each was further divided into several articles and then subdivided into individual points. Here, only the more significant points, principally for Low Mass, will be highlighted.

### **Part One: Low Mass**

Here, the authors insert spiritual recommendations for the celebrant. They refer to the liturgical hours of Matins and Lauds as part of his preparations for Mass. This is somewhat unusual, inasmuch as those two hours of the Breviary were often anticipated and placed in the afternoon or evening before, with the result that morning prayer was celebrated in the evening. The authors also proposed some time for mental prayer, in keeping with Vincentian practice, and the recitation of the optional preparatory prayers already given in the Missal.

As for vesting, it is presumed that the celebrant would wear his clerical cassock. The authors then suggest vesting with a surplice, if this could easily be done. This remark may refer to the special and elaborately developed surplices proper to individual dioceses, whose bulk would have rendered their use quite inconvenient. A surprise comes with the recommendation that a handkerchief should be added to the cincture, certainly not a detail in the Missal itself. The celebrant could also continue to wear his zucchetto or not, apparently depending on his choice.

The passage from the sacristy to the altar seems simple enough, but the authors included numerous details about special kinds of bows and genuflections and the handling of the biretta to be made on the way, depending on Masses being celebrated on side altars or not, or the presence of others, including higher clergy or even sovereigns. The situation envisaged here is the multiplicity of priests living in diocesan parishes, at times thirty or

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<sup>25</sup> Alméras covered the same issues in his circular letter of 22 April 1662 cited above (*Recueil*, vol. 1, p. 52). The editors of the *Recueil* did not include a memorandum on the controversial subject of local ceremonies. He concludes that the pope himself “does not disapprove of well received and edifying local customs.” (See “Resolutions Touchant les Coustumes Locales qui Peuvent Servir de maximes Generales,” in ACMP, Alméras, dossier 37.)

forty, and their obligation to celebrate founded Masses on certain side altars for the intentions of the donors.

After the prayers at the foot of the altar, one of the most complicated issues dealt with the collects. It was common enough for a celebrant to recite only the single proper collect of the Mass, but he was free to add one or two others depending on his personal devotion. The Missal itself prescribed multiple collects on some occasions, or the diocesan bishop could require another in times of particular need. In the case of the celebration of votive Masses, three or even five collects could be recited. The explanation of what was possible and what was not did not make the celebrant's obligation any easier to understand or fulfill.

The authors' attention to detail included how to stand at an altar facing the people, such as those well known in the ancient churches in the city of Rome and elsewhere in Italy. A further peculiarity was a note on where the celebrant was to place his eyeglasses at the altar if he needed to remove them (that is, elsewhere than on the corporal).

Following the readings, the authors turned to the prevailing custom in France of the presentation of gifts from the people. This was to be done at the altar rail before the offertory proper. As a sign of their acceptance, the celebrant would present the Pax (a cross or some other pious image to be kissed by the donors). At a solemn Mass, the same procedure was to be employed, except that if money was offered, the subdeacon would receive this offering and place it in a special vessel, possibly for the sake of security.

At the beginning of the Canon of the Mass, the celebrant would have various possibilities in the choice of a preface. On some occasions, more than one preface could be prescribed, of which only one would be said. Here, too, the resolution of the difficulty of choice was complicated by overlapping celebrations of vigils, octaves, requiems, and ember days, to name a few. The choice was rendered more difficult by the thought that it could be a venial sin to knowingly choose the wrong preface.

The authors also felt the need to resolve doubts concerning the mention of anyone else in the memento of the living in the canon of the Mass, apart from the pope and the bishop. By exception, the celebrant might include an abbot or someone else, and especially the king, as was the custom in France.

For most celebrants the elevation was a high point of the Eucharist. The *Manual* describes this action carefully, and includes the note that the celebrant was to simply lift up the host to be seen and venerated, and not moved from side to side, as this was a custom reserved to the pope, and possibly mentioned in the Roman ceremonial books.

Following the Agnus Dei comes the kiss of peace, the Pax. The *Manual* notes that it is not given at low Masses, except to eminent persons, such as prelates and princes. It can also be given to the spouses at a marriage, provided it is local custom. In that case, the "instrument of peace" is offered not by the celebrant but by a cleric vested in surplice.

For the communion of the faithful, the Confiteor is said, this time by the altar server or servers, followed by the traditional absolutions. The authors note that the people's response, *Domine, non sum dignus* (Lord, I am not worthy) said by the servers, was to be said in the masculine form (*dignus*) and not in the feminine (*digna*), if only women were present to receive communion, as in a convent of religious. This observation must have arisen out of the contrary practice in certain places.

A further custom should be mentioned here, although the *Manual* postpones it to different places in the text. That is the "ablution of the mouth," as the celebrant did after

receiving communion; this was given to those of the faithful who received communion during or after the Mass. In the notes for the server at a low Mass, the book specifies that the server is to prepare for this purpose a cup or glass, not a chalice, with unconsecrated wine mixed with water, along with a cloth for the communicants to wipe their lips after they swallow the host. It is noted that this happens only if it is the local custom.

The Mass then concluded according to the rubrics, but with certain exceptions such as special Gospel to be read occasionally in place of the beginning of Saint John's Gospel.

Should communion be distributed outside of Mass, either before or after, the *Manual* offers the traditional rubrics, including the ablution of the mouth with water. The *Manual*, however, discourages the practice of communion immediately before the Mass.

The next articles review the rubrics for Requiem Masses, inasmuch as they differed in many respects from those of the standard low Mass. The same is true of a low Mass celebrated in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament exposed, as for special Eucharistic celebrations, such as the Forty Hours Devotion.

For the sake of completeness, Alm ras and his collaborators included the specific rubrics for Mass celebrated in the presence of any cardinal, an archbishop in his province, or a bishop in his diocese. Should there be Mass celebrated in the presence of nobles, a Gospel book could be given them to kiss, but not the same as the one used at the Mass itself (for which no explanation is given), and the *Manual* notes that this is never to be done for women. One exception to this rule, also not explained, is that following local custom the book could be given to a king or queen to venerate. It is not clear exactly at which point in the liturgy this action takes place, such as immediately following the proclamation of the Gospel or at the end of Mass.

A few pages follow to summarize the gestures employed in ceremonies: reverences and prostrations, genuflections, various kinds of bows, and the signs of the Cross. Several sections review the rubrics concerning how to extend one's hands and arms or when to join one's hands; kisses at numerous points, the placement of hands, when eyes are raised, and finally the volume of speech, whether low, medium, or high. Only the first two voice levels are mentioned, however.

A considerable space is devoted to altar servers. If they are clerics, they vest in a surplice. If not, they wore a shoulder cape. The first set of explanations dealt with the duties of a single server. The preparations of the altar and its accoutrements are his responsibility. This includes two unusual details: preparing a heater, probably a small charcoal brazier placed on the altar during cold weather, and a thick wax candle on a candle holder placed near the book. Its purpose was to provide sufficient light in dark churches or chapels. In general, the altar server was not to leave the priest or become too obvious, as with the level of his voice, and at the same time to preserve piety and decorum.

An important duty of the server was to prepare a special candle for the elevation, clearly to provide light so that the faithful could see the host and worship at that moment. If customary, two candles were held for feasts. Since they were lighted at the time of the Sanctus, they are sometimes known as the Sanctus Candles. More details are also given at this point about how to offer the Pax at the time of the Agnus Dei. In this case, the server brings the Pax from the credence, along with a towel, unless one was already attached to this "instrument." He then gave it to the priest to venerate, and then offered it to the proper person to kiss and wipe it with the towel after each one venerates it. He would say *Pax tecum* (Peace be with you) to each recipient.

At the end of the low Mass, he would lead the celebrant back to the sacristy, help him unvest, fold and put away his handkerchief and clear the altar. Should the priest unvest at the altar—a rare occasion—the server would place the vestments on the Gospel side of the altar.

The following section deals with having two servers and how their duties are shared. As for the celebrant, special rubrics were in force for Mass celebrated in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament exposed, for Requiem Masses, and Masses celebrated in the presence of eminent persons. The server should be careful that the Gospel book is to be venerated after the reading by a prelate or prelates in attendance, but a separate Gospel book should be venerated by a prince (and not a princess, as noted above). However, when the Pax is given, it may be given to “a very important princess.”

Again, for the sake of completeness, numerous details are presented for a chaplain accompanying a prelate at his low Mass. The bishop may vest either in the sacristy or at the altar, and his chaplain will prepare the special candle and candlestick, known, in Italian, as the *bugia* (French: *bougie*). For his vestments, some prelates added a special ornamented collar that fit around the neck of his alb. The final vestment was always the maniple, put on at the conclusion of the prayers at the foot of the altar, and thus regarded as a sign of his final preparation for the celebration which theoretically began as the prelate ascended the steps of the altar.

During the celebration at the altar, various special kisses were given to the bishop’s hand or the altar vessels, much as kisses were given to the high nobility in civil society at that time. Further details were laid out for these pontifical low Masses, and, when the prelate had two servers, they were to be priests if at all possible.

### ***Part Two: Solemn Mass***

As the missal describes as a solemn Mass with all the officers, or a high Mass only with an acolyte, the *Manual* follows the same distinction. For example, if a master of ceremonies is lacking, the thurifer can substitute, and, in place of a subdeacon, an acolyte in a surplice can sing the epistle; and the priest sings the gospel instead of a deacon.

The *Manual* describes in great detail the many preparations (candles, reliquaries, flowers) needed for the altar, and the vesture of the assistants, either surplices or copes, as was the French custom. Specific points about incensations, ritual kissings, and the handling of birettas fill many pages. The *prône*, the French term for an instruction following the proclamation of the Gospel, appears more than once, depending on the level of solemnity of the Mass. It is always presented as an option, not a requirement. This is different from the lengthy sermon, normally held in the context of vespers on Sunday afternoons or special feasts. This concluded with Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament.

The solemn Mass continues to its conclusion according to the rubrics. One detail shows the important custom in France of adding antiphons and orations for the king or during public necessities. These antiphons were sung by the choir simultaneously with the recitation of the last Gospel.

A solemn Requiem Mass called for particular variations in the celebration, summarized in the *Manual*. In some instances, this form of the Mass, without the numerous bows, reverences, and kissings, reflected an earlier form of the Roman rite, hence its importance as an example of liturgical development. Part of the customs maintained on these occasions involved the exclusion of the faithful from the reception

of communion, lighted candles held by clerics in choir, and the elimination of the kiss of peace.

Further variants were also presented: Mass in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament exposed (a custom the *Manual* discouraged); Mass in the presence of a bishop, both inside and outside his diocese, requiems in the presence of a bishop; and Mass in the presence of sovereigns, princes or princesses, and various minor prelates and dignitaries.

### ***Part Three: Divine Office***

In this section, the *Manual* reviews the possibilities for celebrations of vespers, compline (often joined to vespers), matins (often followed by lauds, and even prime). Each of these took on a different character if they were celebrated in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament exposed, for requiems, in the presence of a bishop. All things considered, it was worth having a well instructed master of ceremonies to organize and direct these offices with all their complexities and variations.

### ***Part Four: Various special ceremonies***

The *Manual* spent a good deal of space on details governing the rubrics for clerics in choir at Masses and Offices. Since highly placed laity, beginning with kings, could be admitted to sit in the choir, they deserved special attention. One of the most troublesome issues was the order in which individuals would be incensed. The *Manual* suggested that local custom should be preserved to keep peace between the clergy and the laity, a remarkable and noteworthy observation for its time.

For some reason, this part of the *Manual* gives significant attention to the Pax, the kiss of peace. It discussed when it could be given, how, who received it, the formulaic prayer accompanying it, the order of presentation, and special cases, such as who would pass it to a prelate or prelates in attendance

The distribution of communion to those attending in choir received similar attention. Communicants were to kneel, handle a communion cloth or have a paten brought to them and held under their chin. For the ablution of the mouth after receiving the host, various possibilities were laid out. These differed for prelates who received, or laity. During the distribution of communion to the faithful, a server could hold a torch and accompany the celebrant, apparently to supply enough illumination for him to distribute communion properly. development and training in the nature and means of engaging in the new evangelization.

Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament could be given either during another solemn office, or separately. In each case, the *Manual* spelled out the details. A special case was Forty Hours Devotion, a practice that dated from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. This time of prayer began and ended with a special Mass and could include a procession with the Blessed Sacrament and time for forty continuous hours of private prayer recalling the time Jesus spent in the tomb.

The special case of processions followed in the *Manual*. The authors knew that crowds could be unruly and so insisted that the clergy should give good example by their gravity and modesty, with no talking or looking about. All outdoor processions could be extended to include visiting nearby churches, carrying important relics, and the like, with music and special prayers. The *Manual* even included practical details of a procession held in the rain or the hot sun.

Finally, the *Manual* closes with more details specific to funerals.

## Observations

A simple perusal of the *Manual* will show how the Roman liturgy had grown in detail and complexity in the post-Tridentine period. Many popes took a hand in promoting or guiding further changes, whether toward greater elaboration or toward more simplicity. Amid these developments, the Congregation of the Mission assumed an important role, probably without realizing it, in the shape of the Church's liturgy. The *Manual* examined here was one of the most noteworthy elements in liturgical development. It presaged the numerous subsequent studies of the Church's worship and in some way paved the way to the *Novus Ordo* of Pope Saint Paul VI, today's ordinary form of the Mass.

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*Manuel des ceremonies romaines qui s’observent dans les plus ordinaires offices divins, tiré des livres romains les plus authentiques, & des plus intelligens écrivains en cette matiere, par quelques-uns des prestres de la congregation de L[a] M[ission].* 1662. Paris. The “Derniere Edition” [i.e., Most Recent Edition], Lyons, 1691, called Second Edition at the end of the text addressed to the reader. Many others followed, and the work took its place among the standard works on the subject.

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