



Fœderatio Internationalis *Una Voce*

Positio N. 29

THE ROLE OF THE LAITY
IN THE
EXTRAORDINARY FORM

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From the General Introduction

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

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

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

The Role Of The Laity In The Extraordinary Form: Abstract

It has been argued that the Extraordinary Form excludes the laity from liturgical participation by accommodating only a limited number of formal liturgical roles for the laity: thus they can be servers, but not readers or Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. This claim is itself linked to accusations of ‘clericalism’. This paper shows that the formal liturgical roles are not intended to promote participation, but rather the worthy celebration of the liturgy, and the danger today, condemned notably by Pope St John Paul II and Pope Francis, is rather a clericalist ‘clericalisation’ of the laity, which seeks, on the basis of a perception that clerics alone in the Church have authority and prestige, to make an elite of the laity an adjunct of the clerical class. The clear demarcation between clerics and laity in the Extraordinary Form facilitates a strong sense of the proper lay role, of conforming the home and the worlds of work and politics to Christ.

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FIUV PP 29: THE ROLE OF THE LAITY IN THE EXTRAORDINARY FORM

1. Lay involvement in formal liturgical roles, such as go beyond simply being a member of the congregation, is much less prominent in the Extraordinary Form (EF) than in the Ordinary Form,¹ and it is sometimes said that the practice of the EF unnecessarily excludes the laity from a closer participation in the liturgy in this respect, and even that this exclusion is indicative of clericalism. This paper responds to this argument, in the context of the wider issue of the role of the laity in the Church.
2. In this series of papers the question of liturgical participation of the ordinary members of the congregation has already been addressed,² and some ways of deepening the liturgical experience of the laity in the Extraordinary Form have been suggested.³

Clericalism, Clericalisation, and Caesaropapism

3. Clerics, those in clerical orders, and non-clerics, both lay and religious,⁴ have different roles in the Church and in salvation history. ‘Clericalism’ may be defined as a tendency to minimise the importance and dignity of the laity, and for the clergy to suppress their proper autonomy in their own sphere. Its opposite is ‘caesaropapism’, according to which lay authorities arrogate the authority proper to clerics. Both phenomena have appeared in the history of the Church; neither, however, has established a lasting dominance in Catholic thinking. While the collaboration between the two spheres may be close, and the same individuals may have both lay and clerical roles,⁵ the distinction between the secular and spiritual spheres remains real.
4. ‘Clericalisation’ is a term popularised by Pope St John Paul II.⁶ As he explained, it

¹ In the Extraordinary Form it will usually be lay persons who serve the Altar, form the Choir, and on Sundays take the Offertory Collection. In the Ordinary Form other lay roles are usually added to these, such as lay lectors (on Sundays, of two non-Gospel readings), leaders of the responsorial psalm and bidding prayers, those taking part in the Offertory Procession, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHCs), and in some cases the leaders of simultaneous para-liturgical services such as a ‘children’s liturgy’. Many of these roles are listed and governed by the Code of Canon Law (1983), Canon 230, and the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (2003) 98-107.

² Positio 2: *Liturgical Piety and Participation in the Extraordinary Form*.

³ Notably, by restoring the Eucharistic Fast to a more meaningful length (Positio 10: *The Eucharistic Fast*); restoring Holy Days of Obligation to their traditional dates (Positio 13: *Holy Days of Obligation*); and permitting the celebration of the pre-1955 Holy Week services (Positio 14: *The Holy Week Reform of 1955*).

⁴ Religious are sometimes distinguished from the laity, and sometimes included in it. In this paper it is important to note that religious, just as religious, are not clerics, though they also differ from (the other) laity.

⁵ Thus a cleric can be a qualified doctor, teacher, or architect; historically, certain bishops have exercised temporal authority, and today the Pope still does so.

⁶ See for Pope St John Paul II Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (1988) 23: ‘In the same Synod Assembly, however, a critical judgment was voiced along with these positive elements, about a too-indiscriminate use of the word “ministry”, the confusion and the equating of the common priesthood and the ministerial priesthood, the lack of observance of ecclesiastical laws and norms, the arbitrary interpretation of the concept of “supply”, the tendency towards a “clericalisation” of the lay faithful and the risk of creating, in reality, an ecclesial structure of parallel service to that founded on the Sacrament of Orders.’ (‘vocabuli “ministerium”, circa confusionem et, interdum, exaequationem commune inter et sacerdotium ministeriale, circa id quod aliquae ecclesiasticae leges et normae parum observentur; quod ad arbitrium fiat interpretatio de conceptu

becomes a form of clericalism when the sacramental or liturgical roles that belong to the priest are assumed by the lay faithful, or when the latter set out to accomplish tasks of pastoral governing that properly belong to the priest.⁷

Again:

The commitment of lay persons is politicised when the laity is absorbed by the exercise of ‘power’ within the Church.⁸

5. Pope Francis has recently underlined this analysis:
Women in the Church must be valued not ‘clericalised’. Whoever thinks of women as cardinals suffers a bit from clericalism.⁹
6. Instead of denying the premise of clericalism, that to the clergy alone in the Church belongs dignity and authority, clericalisation attempts to redress the balance between clergy and laity in favour of latter by allowing the laity a share of specifically clerical dignity and authority, under clerical direction. Since only a few laity can be privileged in this way, as Pope Francis has recently observed, a new, clericalised elite is created.¹⁰
7. The correct response to clericalism is to accord the appropriate dignity and autonomy to the roles of both clergy and laity. Thus, the Second Vatican Council’s Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, *Apostolicam actuositatem* teaches:
The laity must take up the restoration of the temporal order [*ordo temporalis*] as their own special task. Led by the light of the Gospel and the mind of the Church and motivated by Christian charity, they must act directly and in a definite way in the temporal sphere.¹¹
As the Decree goes on to detail, this can be done in the context of family, professional, and political life.¹²

Lay liturgical roles

8. With the assistance of these distinctions, the weakness of the claim that the Extraordinary Form exemplifies a clericalist attitude, because it excludes the laity from certain liturgical roles which

“subsidiaritatis”; quod christifideles laici quodammodo “clericalizentur”; quod periculum adsit re constituendi structuram quamdam ecclesiam servitii quae parallela existat illi quae Ordinis sacramento fundatur.’)

⁷ Pope St John Paul II, Address to the Bishops of the Antilles, 7th May 2002.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Interview in *La Stampa* with Andrea Tornielli, published 14th December 2013.

¹⁰ Pope Francis, Letter to the President of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, Marc, Cardinal Ouellet, 19th March 2016: ‘Without realizing it, we have generated a lay elite, believing that only they are committed laymen who work in the things “of the priests,”’ The type of clericalism criticised by Pope Francis in this letter is a modern phenomenon: ‘that I consider fruit of a bad living of the ecclesiology posed by Vatican II’.

¹¹ Second Vatican Council *Apostolicam actuositatem* 7. The translation given on the Vatican website has been tweaked in favour of a more literal rendering. Cf. *Gaudium et spes* 43; *Lumen gentium* 30-38. Cf. Bl. Pope Paul VI Encyclical *Evangelii nuntiandi* (1975) 70; Pope St John Paul II Post-Synodal Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (1988) 15; Pope St John Paul II, Address to the Bishops of the Antilles, 7th May 2002; Pope Benedict *Deus Caritas est* 29.

¹² The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar teaching of the Church is set out by Francis, Cardinal Arinze, in his *The Layperson’s Distinctive Role* (San Francisco CA: Ignatius Press, 2013)

are, in nature or origin, clerical, or at least offer some special collaboration with the clergy,¹³ is evident. This argument derives precisely from the mind-set of clericalisation just described.

9. The idea that active participation requires a formal role in the liturgy has, in fact, consistently been opposed by the Magisterium. As Pope St John Paul II pointed out:

active participation does not preclude the active passivity of silence, stillness and listening: indeed, it demands it. Worshippers are not passive, for instance, when listening to the readings or the homily, or following the prayers of the celebrant, and the chants and music of the liturgy. These are experiences of silence and stillness, but they are in their own way profoundly active.¹⁴

Before and after his election, Pope Benedict XVI emphasised the special profundity of silent participation and communication.¹⁵

10. On the subject of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, the Congregation for Divine Worship found it necessary to point out that permission for the use of EMHCs is intended to meet an exceptional practical need, and is not intended ‘for the sake of a fuller participation of the laity’.¹⁶ Similarly, Cardinal Javierre Ortás, as Prefect of the same Congregation, explained, of the liturgical roles available to the laity under Canon 230:

It must also be clearly understood that the liturgical services mentioned above are carried out by lay people *ex temporanea deputatione*, according to the judgment of the Bishop, without lay people, be they men or women, having any right to exercise them.¹⁷

11. Lay liturgical roles, which can of course be perfectly legitimate and of genuine service to the Church, are not intended for the deeper participation of those performing these roles, or to give the laity some dignity or authority they would not otherwise have: rather, they facilitate the worthy celebration of the liturgy.¹⁸ The laity involved may feel a particularly close engagement

¹³ Most obviously the role of Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion replaces the ‘ordinary’, clerical, minister of Holy Communion, the priest or deacon. The roles of Lector and Acolyte are historically minor clerical orders, and the former in both the Ordinary and the Extraordinary Forms are generally performed in a modified form of clerical dress. More remotely, a lay choir sings what was formerly performed by a clerical schola, as well as the ‘people’s parts’: Josef Jungmann notes that the *Gloria* was from an early stage sung by ‘the clergy gathered in the sanctuary’ (Josef Jungmann *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its origins and development* (English edition, trans Rev. Francis A. Brunner) (New York NY: Benzinger Brothers, 1950) Vol I p357. In a more general sense, the leaders of paraliturgical ‘children’s liturgy’, if not clerics, are taking on a clerical role in leading a service. All these and similar roles take the laity out of the lay sphere, into a sphere in which they are under the direction and authority of clerics.

¹⁴ Pope St John Paul II Ad Limina Address to the Bishops of the Church in Washington, Oregon, Montana, Idaho and Alaska (USA), 1998

¹⁵ Pope Benedict (Joseph, Cardinal Ratzinger) writes in *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Pres, 2000) p209: ‘We are realising more and more clearly that silence is part of the liturgy. We respond, by singing and praying, to the God who addresses us, but the greater mystery, surpassing all words, summons us to silence.’ Cf. Pope Benedict XVI: Message for the 46th World Communications Day ‘Silence and the Word: Path of Evangelization’ (2012): ‘It is often in silence, for example, that we observe the most authentic communication taking place.’ Cf. Positio 9: *Silence and Inaudibility in the Extraordinary Form*.

¹⁶ See the 2004 Instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 151: ‘Only out of true necessity is there to be recourse to the assistance of extraordinary ministers in the celebration of the Liturgy. Such recourse is not intended for the sake of a fuller participation of the laity but rather, by its very nature, is supplementary and provisional.’

¹⁷ Letter of Cardinal Javierre Ortas, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship to Presidents of Bishops’ Conferences, 15 March 1994.

¹⁸ For more on liturgical participation, see Positio 2: *Liturgical Piety and Participation*

in the liturgy: it is often observed that the service of the altar, in particular, can foster vocations.¹⁹ On the other hand, the technical demands on singers and servers (for example), can also impede them in abandoning themselves to a prayerful contemplation of the liturgical action. In any case, such liturgical roles are neither a necessary part of, nor a model for, lay participation in the liturgy; nor do they reflect the proper role of the laity in the Church as a whole.

Lay institutions in the Church

12. The reality of the secular sphere, not as something opposed to spiritual realities but as a part of the Church complementing the clerical sphere, has been obscured by the decline of lay Catholic institutions, so important in the lives of Catholics up to the middle of the twentieth century. Catholic states, lay Catholic institutions involved in education or medicine, guilds and sodalities, and even commercial enterprises with a strong Catholic character, were once able to manifest the Faith in innumerable ways.²⁰
13. Although sometimes abused, temporal authority granted to important clerics, and clerical privileges accorded to important laity,²¹ did in previous centuries serve to manifest a mutual recognition and respect between the two spheres, their harmony and interpenetration in the advancement of the Christian society, and the fact that neither was ultimately subordinate to the other. Today vestiges of this system survive, which retain value. These include the privileges of certain Abbesses, and the role of clergy in some countries in opening sessions of secular legislative bodies. In the Extraordinary Form there is provision for the Pax to be given to 'lay persons of high rank'.²²
14. The intimacy of the support given even to the liturgical work of the Church by the laity in times past is illustrated by the role of guilds and sodalities, which in the Middle Ages took upon themselves the support of specific liturgical needs and tasks;²³ similar support continues to be

¹⁹ See Positio 1: *The Service of the Altar by Men and Boys in the Extraordinary Form*, 3

²⁰ To illustrate, they can take note of the liturgical calendar and religious obligations; they can use or make available blessings and other sacramentals; they can engage in common prayer, such as the Angelus. At a more general level they can maintain an atmosphere and shared attitude: by the members just being Catholic, manifesting their Faith in their words and actions without fear or embarrassment. Since these institutions both provided a spiritually supportive environment for Catholics, and at the same time were inevitably in contact with non-Catholic institutions and individuals, their evangelical impact was considerable.

²¹ A number of kings were given the privilege of receiving the Precious Blood on certain occasions (usually, the day of their coronation and on their deathbeds): see Positio 17, *The Reception of Communion under the Form of Bread Alone in the Extraordinary Form* 20 and note 29. Again, certain kings were historically considered lay proto-canonics of Roman churches: the Holy Roman Emperor in Saint Peter's Basilica, the Kings of France in Saint John Lateran and Saint Peter's, the Kings of Spain in Saint Mary Major, and the Kings of England (before the Reformation) in Saint Paul Outside the Walls. The current King of Spain and the current President of France still bear this title. They had the privilege to serve as deacons in Papal Mass in the Basilicas under their protection, a right only ever practically exercised by the Emperor.

²² J.B. O'Connell *The Celebration of Mass: a study of the Rubrics of the Roman Missal*, 4th Edition (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1963) p430. O'Connell quotes the relevant decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, which accords the privilege to 'magistratus, et Barones ac nobiles' (footnote 21). Usually a Paxbrede is used, though see PP19 *The Kiss of Peace*, Appendix for the customs of Spain and the former Spanish empire.

²³ See Eamon Duffy *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2003) pp25-28. In the small parish which is the subject of this study, particular lay-

the task of the Church's lay benefactors, and, in a different way, that of the *Fœderatio Internationalis Una Voce* and its member associations.

15. Today, the family is the preeminent context in which a lay Catholic community can be maintained, in which the lay role is not delegated from the clergy, but given to them directly from God. As Pope Pius XI emphasised:

The family therefore holds directly from the Creator the mission and hence the right to educate the offspring, a right inalienable because inseparably joined to the strict obligation, a right anterior to any right whatever of civil society and of the State, and therefore inviolable on the part of any power on earth.²⁴

The family is concerned with the spiritual as well as the physical well-being of its members, and the Second Vatican Council described it as the 'domestic Church'.²⁵

16. The spirituality characteristic of Catholics attached to the Extraordinary Form places great emphasis on the family, preserving many positive features of the Catholic home, such as the display of devotional images and prayer in common, which have disappeared from too many nominally Catholic households. They maintain in this way a community with a very rich sense of Catholic identity, where that identity is visible.
17. The witness of Catholic families reminds us that the Church is not a clerical institution to which the laity go for certain goods and services. The Church on earth is the whole of the Faithful, and the family represents the basic unit of that society considered in its temporal aspect. In the temporal sphere the laity have prerogatives and authority which are inalienable.²⁶ An instinctive understanding of this allows Catholics to free themselves from clericalism, and so not to desire to invade the clerical realm.
18. The clear distinction between clergy and laity in the Extraordinary Form facilitates this understanding of their separate roles. At the same time such features of the ancient liturgy as the separate *Confiteor* of priest and servers, and the common direction of worship,²⁷ emphasises that both are engaged, in the liturgy, in a common act of worship.

maintained 'stores' and guilds supplied liturgical consumables such as bees' wax; in larger parishes, wealthy guilds supported side chapels and regular Masses celebrated at them.

²⁴ Pope Pius XI *Divini illius Magistri* 32: 'Habet igitur familia proxime a Creatore munus propterea ius proles educandae; quod quidem ius cune abiici nequeat, quia cum gravissimo officio coniunctum, tum cuivis societatis civilis et reipublicae iuri antecedit, eaque de causa nulli in terris potestati illud infringere licet.' Pope Pius XI was obliged to reiterate this point in response to the violation of parental rights in Nazi Germany: see his 1937 Encyclical *Mitt brenender sorge* 31. Cf. Second Vatican Council Declaration On Christian Education *Gravissimum educationis* 6.

²⁵ Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium* 11: 'The family is, so to speak, the domestic church. In it parents should, by their word and example, be the first preachers of the faith to their children; they should encourage them in the vocation which is proper to each of them, fostering with special care vocation to a sacred state.' ('In hac velut Ecclesia domestica parentes verbo et exemplo sint pro filiis suis primi fidei praecones, et vocationem unicuique propriam, sacram vero peculiari cura, foveant oportet.')

²⁶ *Ibid.* 33.

²⁷ On the common direction of worship, see Positio 4: *Liturgical Orientation* 10. It is interesting to note that in a book dedicated to the subject of clericalism, which evinces a negative evaluation of the former liturgical tradition, Russel Shaw (*To Hunt, To Shoot, To Entertain: Clericalism and the Catholic Laity* (Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock, 1993)) remarks (p197): 'one of the most severe disappointments of postconciliar Catholic life up to now lies in the fact that lay "participation" in so many parishes seems mainly to mean keeping the congregation occupied and agitated, with little or no sense of being a community of persons engaged in a communal act of worship.'

19. Pope Benedict XVI pointed to the positive relationship between a sacralised liturgy and a consciousness of the distinct vocation of the laity, noting:

A weakened sense of the meaning and importance of Christian worship can only lead to a weakened sense of the specific and essential vocation of the laity to imbue the temporal order with the spirit of the Gospel.²⁸

²⁸ Pope Benedict XVI, Address to the Bishops of New York State, 26th November 2011. These remarks are introduced by a reference to the new translation of the Missal.