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## . . . reactions

### Contra Gentiles

W. H. Marshner's "revisitation" of the liturgy ("Contra Gentiles" Dec. '72) was I believe unfair about the condition of the pro-Latin faithful whom without obvious tongue-in-cheek he dismisses as schismatic. Who are these traditionalists in schism even if the term were used playfully? I can think of only one tiny group here in the East who might just possibly qualify: it is arguable that insofar as Fr. De-Pauw, the Catholic Traditionalist Movement leader, continues to function *in sacris* without diocesan faculties, and his lively little congregation on Long Island go along, perhaps he and they, even inside the otherwise largely tolerant confines of the Rockville Centre see, technically are in a kind of rebellion by the old rules. For the rest:

Dietrich von Hildebrand is not in schism when he pleads for our acceptance of the Novus Ordo as valid while prayerfully we work for its withdrawal or modification as inadequate. Una Voce is not in schism when it keeps up pressure on the hierarchy to allow the old rite side by side with the new, but explicitly affirms its belief in the validity of the new rite and urges that validity never be called into question, and not merely out of prudence. Those British are not in schism who succeeded in getting the Archbishop of Westminster last year to win from Paul VI approval of the Tridentine Mass "on special occasions" (a feat of common sense on the Cardinal's part resulting in what is now known a little wryly among pro-Latinists elsewhere in Europe as the "English Indult"). Are the

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#### REACTIONS . . . *continued*

British schismatic in spirit when in impressive numbers they use this papal permission and flock to High Masses the length and breadth of their island? (The new rite is routinely carried out in all the same places.) Who in fact "categorically refuse to accept the Novus Ordo as valid"? People who simply stay away from the churches because they cannot stomach the desacralized, theatrically celebrant-oriented improvisations of so many parish liturgies do not *eo ipso* question validity.

As well, why must desperate appeals to *Quo Primum* be "kooky"? Any effort to wrest legitimacy for one's position from persistent scholarship around, and close scrutiny of, the text is by such logic kooky. What exegesis was not brought into play against *Humanae Vitae*? History may indeed frustrate those who take too seriously cautions by Roman pontiffs against reversals of their decrees handed down for all time, but surely this kind of anomaly and debate are not new to theology? Why must conscientious questions about *pro multis* (scruples consistent with simultaneous acceptance of the Novus Ordo as the promulgation of authority) be "strident"? Mr. Marshner seems put off

by emotion. It may be that the Holy Father himself finds the singing of Latin hymns by traditionalists massed in St. Peter's square strident: stridency often can be in the nerve-ends of the listener.

Mr. Marshner is clearly right when he calls for theological sophistication along with sound research and aesthetic sense in working toward a renewed (restored?) liturgy. He should not simplistically discredit the sophisticated tactics of the Pope's loyal opposition of the liturgical right.

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